

ZEROS

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Preface

I imagine maybe only ten people will read this paper. There are a few possible reasons you could be one of them. Most likely, you are one of the few individuals mandated to read it (my advisor and second reader). To Professor Brown I say: I can't thank you enough for being a guide and voice of reason to me over the last two years. Believe it or not, it was your positive feedback on the early draft of the pilot from Fall 2017 that gave me the confidence and drive to pursue this project for my thesis. To Professor Willett I say: You really "ruined" TV and film for me by making me more critical, perceptive, and appreciative of screenwriting. These are all attributes that served me well while writing these scripts.

But what if you're neither of those people? Who are you? You are my parents or sisters – to you I say please do not point out remaining grammatical and stylistic errors in the final draft as I'll likely (read: definitely) not care and it'll just upset me. You are a Plan II student looking for examples of research theses – to you I say: this is not the droid you are looking for. This is a "research" paper about a fictional series of events I made up in an effort to be funny and graduate with a Plan II degree. Fourth, you are a Plan II student looking for examples of creative theses or treatises. In that case, this might actually be useful. Read on! Finally, you are a political operative working sometime in the future doing opposition research on me if I run for office/do something that makes headlines. To you I say: there are better skeletons buried elsewhere. To all of you, I think my screenplays are hilarious (definitely funnier than this paper) so you should read those instead.

Introduction

This treatise will consist of three primary sections. **Part I:** an analysis of (in my opinion weak or flawed) attempts at making financial services the center of media and the current state of such endeavors. **Part II:** an explanation and analysis of the three “subgenres” of comedy that served as the stylistic foundation of the three episodes, **Part III:** a brief guide to reading screenplays. While reading, please understand that academic/empirical research in the field of scriptwriting is almost nonexistent. As a result, many of the points I make in this treatise are either public opinion or my own. I do my best to preface these claims properly, but understand that very little of what I’ve written is set-in-stone, fundamentally true. If you disagree with something I’ve written please *do not hesitate* to reach out (dnoorily@gmail.com) and challenge me. I welcome conversations on these topics and love hearing others’ opinions on television.

Part I: Financial Services as Portrayed in Media

What’s the Deal with Television?

Did you know that – along with sex and socializing – TV is the activity that makes us happiest? Many might guess that it’s payday, accomplishing something important, cooking, or spending time with their kids. Nope. It’s watching TV.¹ Scientists aren’t completely sure why this is the case, but one guess is that it’s the simplest, most effective, and most ubiquitous form of storytelling available on a grand scale.

Going back, even to prehistory, storytelling has been a critical component of human society. It’s (probably) no coincidence that most religions include an endless array stories (rather

¹ Carey, Benedict. “What Makes People Happy? TV, Study Says,” *New York Times*, Dec. 2, 2004. www.nytimes.com/2004/12/02/health/what-makes-people-happy-tv-study-says.html

than just laws and beliefs) that have been passed down for generations. As Michelle LeBaron Duryea and Jim Potts wrote, “stories communicate values, beliefs, hopes, fears, and dreams of a people in a way that engenders respect and understanding in the listener.”² Conveniently, a boundlessly growing amount of television programming is available all day every day for anyone who can afford to pay for it. Notoriously lazy after a long day, humans choose TV as their daily dose of storytelling because it is so easily accessible and plentiful. It’s the best use of one’s time when they don’t want to do anything.

What’s Good on TV?

A Thinkbox study found that there are five primary reasons individuals decide to watch television: “to unwind, for comfort, for an experience, to escape, or to indulge.”³ It makes sense then that the most successful television series are attuned to providing one or more of these experiences. Mindless television (read: reality TV) can provide comfort or help people unwind. Larger scale, fantasy productions like *Game of Thrones* and *Westworld* provide an escape and an experience. Where do shows about professionals fit in?

Professional Dramas

Since the birth of television, one of the most popular types of programming has revolved around the day-to-day lives of professionals. These include – but are not limited to – legal, medical, and law enforcement shows. They provide the comfort of realistic scenarios while also indulging the audience in a (partially fabricated) professional world they do not belong in. Actual

² Duryea, M. L., and Potts, J, “Story and Legend: Powerful Tools for Conflict Resolution.” *Conflict Resolution Quarterly* 10 (1993): 393

³ “Why People Watch Television,” *informaitv*. Jul. 7, 2013. informitv.com/2013/07/07/why-people-watch-television

professionals tend to dislike the shows about their professions. The reason usually provided is that plotlines and events aren't realistic. That's definitely true, but perhaps these shows are also unappealing because they fail to provide either comfort or indulgence to those professionals.

There is another element of professional dramas that makes them so effective. There are essentially two basic "genres" of scripted, non-reality television: procedural and serial.

Procedural television refers to programs where new plots are introduced and resolved over the course of a single episode. *Crime Scene Investigation* and its various offshoots are good examples considering a new crime is committed, investigated, and closed in almost every single episode. Character development and long-term story arcs are often half-assed or omitted entirely... but the audience is okay with this because the subject matter (typically crime) is just so juicy. Serial television is the exact opposite of this: each episode follows an evolving story arc that could last a whole season or even seasons. The aforementioned *Game of Thrones* and *Westworld* are good examples of this because any stand-alone episode would either be meaningless/boring without the preceding episodes and would have an unresolved plot without the succeeding ones.

Where medical and legal professional dramas thrive is in the middle. For the sake of ease and because it reads humorously, let's call this genre *proserial*: new, procedural stories every episode behind a backdrop of season or seasons-long arcs. It's no wonder *Grey's Anatomy* could run for fifteen seasons. The writers had the freedom of mixing new and old storylines at any ratio they desired. This made the audience's boredom – either from repetitive *proceduralness* or slow-moving *serialness* – avoidable. On the other hand, the later seasons of *The Good Wife*, where the writers essentially abandoned the procedural element of the show, are considered the show's weakest.

Workplace Comedies

Television comedies about professionals are notably less common. Even in television shows where the main setting is the workplace, the work being done takes a backseat to other dynamics. For some shows, it's not even in the backseat – it's in the trunk under the jumper cables. Consider some comedies where the workplace is so important that it's literally the name of the show. What do the characters in *The Office* do? Sell paper. I imagine most of you knew that, but I doubt you could point out times it had any bearing on the plot. What about *Workaholics*? What do they do? They work at a telemarketing firm. Bet you didn't get that one, did you?

One of the only successful shows that really “leaned in” to the workplace is *Silicon Valley*. What made it good? Aside from great characters and hilarious dynamics, my guess is that the show took some pointers from the professional dramas outlined above: *proserial...ness*. Episodes present brand-new challenges and goofy scenarios for the Pied Piper crew, but there are story arcs that last for entire seasons.

So, can the *proserial* model work for financial professionals?

Finance, Fiction, and Film

Almost antonymic to television, movies about financial professionals are *more common* than movies about doctors. Additionally – and this is anecdotal – many of my good friends who couldn't care less about finance rank *The Wolf of Wall Street* in their pantheons of greatest films ever created. What the hell is up with that? How can movies about finance constitute a relevant

portion of our culture – so much so that I actually took a class called “Finance, Fiction, and Film” – when television programming on the same subject matter is completely non-existent?

Generally speaking, what makes a good movie does not necessarily make a good television show.⁴ The only two recent examples I can think of are *Limitless* (2015) and *About a Boy* (2014). Both had extremely short runs despite their cinematic equivalents – *About a Boy* (2002) is a personal favorite of mine – having been well-received and successful. I’ve never tried or thought about adapting a film for television, but it seems like the most obvious issue would be that (most) movies are written as complete, fulfilling, cathartic stories while (many) television shows are written to last *ad infinitum*. Perhaps this explains why fewer movies are made about the other professionals. Without the ability to introduce fun and exciting mystery medicine and court cases throughout, an exciting, cogent medical or legal movie isn’t easy to write.

Another reason movies about finance have been successful is that the source materials are often true. *The Big Short*, *The Wolf of Wall Street*, and *The Wizard of Lies* are all dramatizations of actual events. Even in “Finance, Film, and Fiction” where a point was made that none of the three movies we watched would be based on actual events (given the “Fiction” part of the name), we watched *Margin Call*. Although the investment bank at which a mortgage-backed security crisis occurs remains unnamed, the CEO is named: John Tuld. This maybe – just maybe – could be a combination of the Morgan Stanley and Lehman Brothers CEOs’ who oversaw a similar mortgage-backed security crisis (John Thain and Richard Fuld). So, eliminating dramatizations and what are basically dramatizations, what’s left? Not a ton. *Wall Street* and *American Psycho* are classics, but their stories would be hard to proceduralize. So, if we can’t look to movies, we’ll have to look to existing television series.

⁴ if you can, search this link and take note of how few episodes were produced for these television shows.
<https://screencrush.com/movies-you-didnt-know-became-tv-series/>

Billions

When *Billions* premiered, I was but a wee freshman. I distinctly recall watching the new episodes weekly in my tiny room at the Callaway House. What sweet serendipity! Just as I was deciding to pursue finance as a major and most likely as a career path, a high-budget, Showtime finance-bro/legal drama came out! A sign for sure! If I liked the show then I could rest easy, knowing I had chosen the right course of study. Even if that silly logic were true, it didn't matter. The show wasn't very good. I know I am at odds with most critics and audiences, but *Billions* just didn't cut it for me.

This is for *several* reasons. The show was plagued from the very start with a problem that plenty of soon-to-be-cancelled shows struggle with: lack of character development. From the very beginning it's clear you're dealing with two potentially likeable antiheroes: Bobby (runs a hedge fund) and Chuck (runs the prosecutor's office). Chuck hates Bobby because he keeps evading the law while he continues to break it. Bobby hates Chuck because... he keeps trying to catch him breaking the law. To make things even weirder, Chuck's wife works for Bobby, which leads to even more dramatic nonsense. While this setup isn't particularly bad on its face, the dynamics never change. Neither character ever learns anything and their primary motivations (Chuck = convict Bobby; Bobby = avoid conviction) never change.

Two other problems I had that are more specific to the plot of *Billions* are on-the-nose dialogue/exposition and a fantastical approach to financial concepts. On-the-nose dialogue refers to when characters say things that normal people would *never* say in real life. It sounds scripted and makes it difficult for viewers to take the show seriously. *Billions* does this a lot with Bobby, Chuck, and plenty of other characters pontificating about moral imperatives (or whatever else they want) every ten minutes. A related issue is how *Billions* handles exposition. Given that the

show involves legal and financial concepts – things you cannot expect an audience to be familiar with – the writers need to figure out a way to explain things to the audience without it being too on-the-nose. Legal and medical dramas can usually handle this by explaining difficult concepts to clients/patients or less experienced professionals. In *Billions*, we often see financial analysts explaining financial concepts to each other or an equivalent explanation between lawyers. If we're lucky, *maybe* an attorney will explain the law to a financial analyst (although it is usually a law the analyst should already be aware of).

Lastly – don't worry, the *Billions* rant is almost over – the way the show portrays financial services is absurd. I understand this is a television drama, but they do some pretty wild stuff. My favorite example revolves around a time when Bobby's firm buys up all of a small town's debt in the hopes that it becomes more valuable after a large casino is built there. Sadly, the casino falls through and it becomes likely that the town will default on their debt.

Quick finance lesson: For those who don't know, creditors' rights with government debt that belongs to cities are typically very limited. Unlike corporate debt, where creditors typically have claims on assets, these creditors are usually only guaranteed by the taxing power of the entity whose bonds they own. This means that when these entities – such as the small town whose debt Bobby owns – cannot pay their debt, they are obligated to raise taxes in order to help pay off the debt.

Back to Bobby. After he suspects the town will default on the debt, Bobby forecloses on the town – whatever that means – and seizes their land and buildings. Even to the layperson I'm sure this seems ridiculous. Imagine if The City of Detroit was literally taken over by a bunch of investment firms that held its debt when it defaulted. Imagine if China and Japan were legally allowed to take over the United States if we defaulted on our debt. Ridiculous, isn't it?⁵

⁵ If you want to learn more about this particular episode, this *Medium* piece covers it in great detail: <https://medium.com/dean-myerow-on-municipal-bonds/the-show-billions-and-the-municipal-bond-market-3ef1e3a11dc5>.

Ground Floor

From what I can tell, there has only been one television comedy that had anything to do with financial services and it was TBS' *Ground Floor*. I won't spend too much time on this, but the show basically followed a young, bright-eyed-bushy-tailed investment banker, his irritable boss, and his crush: a girl who worked on the ground floor (*haha*) of the office building. The show was cancelled after twenty episodes. Aside from the typical problem leading to cancellation – no one watched it – the show also never leaned in on the whole finance part.

Can It Be Done?

So the only two examples of television shows about finance are less than ideal. Is it even possible then? Given what we've learned so far, there are a few things to keep in mind if someone (i.e., me) were to attempt writing such a show: make it *proserial*, avoid on-the-nose dialogue, be mindful of the treatment of financial concepts, and lean in to the finance.

It's not perfect, but what I came up with is *Zeros* – a show about trillions of dollars and the losers who manage it. The show follows two college kids – Zach and David – during their summer interning at a prestigious global investment firm – Veridian Capital. Each episode is written in a different comedic style, outlined below.

Part II: Comedic Writing Styles

Episode 1, “Pilot” – Standard Single-Camera Comedy

“Standard” comedies have no defining stylistic characteristics that set them apart from the other writing styles, as I will explain below. There was no particular style in mind when I wrote the pilot of *Zeros*. The goal was just “set up the plot of the series and make some good jokes along the way.” When you think of a particular TV comedy and why it’s funny, unless a specific plot device or writing style is apparent, it would likely fall into this arbitrary group. *Silicon Valley*, *Fresh Off the Boat*, and *Superstore* are personal favorites of mine.

As with anything, though, these styles lie on a multi-dimensional spectrum rather than in specified bins. *Silicon Valley* has farcical elements, but not nearly to the extent that other shows do. I would consider *Parks and Recreation* a combination of mockumentary and farce. It is also common for standard comedies to do “crossover episodes” with these other styles. For example, there were mockumentary episodes of *30 Rock* (S5 E9, “Queen of Jordan”) and *Blue Mountain State* (S3 E10, “One Week”). The later seasons of *Community* are well known for writing many episodes in completely different styles.

The other component of this section is “single-camera.” There are two different styles in which television has typically been filmed: multi-camera and single-camera. To the lay person, multi-camera shows might feel a little outdated as they are typically filmed in front of live studio audiences (so there are laugh tracks) and the filming/cinematographic quality is usually lower.⁶ They’re called mutli-camera because multiple cameras are filming each scene from different

⁶ This could be for a number of reasons. The fact that multi-camera shows film scenes “at one time” (unlike single-camera shows that reshoot scenes from every camera angle), lighting and shadows cannot be optimized between shots is one of them.

angles at the same time. *The Big Bang Theory* is a good example of a multi-camera show that is still running.

In recent years, most television comedies have shifted to single-camera. In these shows, every scene is usually shot separately (with necessary changes in lighting and so on) with a “single-camera” running at one time. As a result, the shows feel crisper, more realistic, and can film more logistically complicated scenes than a multi-camera show can. Many multi-camera shows have standard “sets” where the angles are always the same. In *The Big Bang Theory* it is their living room; in *Friends* it is Central Perk. Shots with movement, that are outside, or otherwise difficult to film from multiple angles at the same time are rarer in multi-camera shows.

Given that each episode of *Zeros* has a variety of locations and there are often shots of characters walking through the office and around New York, single-camera made the most sense. Additionally, multi-camera shows are somewhat out of fashion and laugh tracks are... unpopular to the say the least. Lastly, I always envisioned *Zeros* to have that high-quality expensive feel which is a hallmark of single-camera comedies.

Episode 2, “Clout Chasing” – Farce

If you read episode 2 of *Zeros*, “Clout Chasing,” you should realize about half way through that the plot isn’t very realistic. A secret society entirely devoted to perpetuating the AirPods way of life? Unlikely. Hopefully the episode is still funny because even though none of the plotlines *could* happen, you can envision a fantastical world in which they *would* happen because of pre-existing notions we have on the subjects.

I was astonished by the number of AirPods-wearing professionals I saw on the subway every morning. It felt like there was a mutual understanding between strangers donning AirPods that

they were in some sort of special group in the upper echelons of society. The Pod Head Society of episode 2 was born. Similarly, I had an incredibly difficult time rectifying an error (one that was purposely caused by Equinox to charge me more money and make my life more difficult) with my gym membership over the summer. I found solace in online forums where other patrons complained of how difficult Equinox, Gold's and Lifetime memberships are to cancel. This is where David's plotline in episode 2 came from.

This is the heart of the farcical style of comedy: pushing what the audience can relate to into the extreme. One of my favorite shows in this style is *Broad City*. In one *Broad City* episode (S3 E5, "2016"), one of the main characters is excited to go to the DMV so that she can finally get a new license photograph. In the show, they stylize the DMV like *The Walking Dead*. The depraved office has unbearably long waits and individuals are identified by a confusing sequence of symbols rather than numbers. People say goodbye to their loved ones when their names are finally called and violence is commonplace. She ends up returning to the DMV after her picture turns out even worse than before – but this time she makes an online reservation. Now the DMV is completely different. She gets a massage while she waits, enjoys a chocolate fountain, and has a full-on photoshoot with a professional photographer. *Obviously*, the real DMV is nothing like either of these scenarios. However, both situations are laugh-out-loud hilarious because people hate the DMV because of its long waits and weird crowds. Recently, though, the process has become more of a standard errand than a feat of bravery for those of us who use online reservations.

Episode 3, “Weekend at Louie’s” – Mockumentary

The mockumentary is probably the most well-known of these three styles (if you can even call the first one a style). A portmanteau of mock and documentary, mockumentaries are films and television shows wherein a documentarian actively films the cast from day to day. They will also conduct interviews with the cast throughout. This style was (probably) popularized first by the cult-classic *This is Spinal Tap* where we follow a documentarian as he gets footage of a washed-up rock band.

The style gained some momentum for television in the 2000s with the British run of *The Office* but really struck gold with the American *The Office* later in the decade. *Modern Family*, *Parks and Recreation*, *American Vandal*, and all five of Chris Lilly’s shows have seen great success with this style over the last ten years. Is there any reason this might be? Why did mockumentaries get so popular and do so well?

The proper use of interviews can really help a script out. They serve three primary purposes: exposition, humor, and dramatic irony. Remember what I said earlier about on-the-nose dialogue and how difficult it can be to explain things to the audience via dialogue? No worries. Just put it in an interview where the character *knows* he’s describing something to the audience. Have an event/set up you don’t want to film but need the audience to know happened? Make a cast member tell the audience about it. Second, jokes that wouldn’t work in a regular TV show (e.g., couldn’t work in dialogue) can just be put in an interview. For example, in episode 3 of *Zeros*, Gabriel gains access to another building by subtly suggesting to the security guard that he can’t remember who Gabriel is because Gabriel is black. In the interview room he says “works every time.” There’s no natural, non-interview situation where that line could’ve worked. Third, dramatic irony can easily be set up/enhanced through interviews if there’s something you want

the audience to know that other characters do not. All of these enhance the writing of the show without taking much away from it.

Additionally, there is a lot of freedom with what the writers and production staff can do within the confines of the style. How much do they want to “lean in” to the mockumentary? Breaking of the fourth wall is common (think of *The Office*’s Jim looking straight at the camera). Direct interactions/conversations with the documentarian are less common but can still be effective. Some shows like *American Vandal* truly are fake documentaries and could be watched like any other docuseries on TV. Some shows like *Modern Family* really aren’t clear on why there is a cameraman and interviews. Either way, it still works without exhausting the style for the audience.

Part III: User Guide

Reading a screenplay is relatively straightforward. After the setting of a scene is established, actions and dialogue ensue. Actions are left justified and describe what is happening in the present tense. Dialogue is denoted by a centered character's name in all caps – they are the one who is speaking – followed by what they say below in narrower margins. I have included a few excerpts from a *Recording Radio Film Connection Blog*'s post about reading screenplays by Liya Swift:⁷

“Screenplays are strange beasts. They're one part blue print, one part novel, and one part play. Thanks to this fact, knowing how to read a screenplay can be quite confusing for people who are trying it for the first time. Screenplays or scripts as they're also called, tend to vacillate wildly from large blocks of text to simple paired-down, itty bitty lines of dialogue that might leave you sad for the trees...”

“The first thing you should understand when reading scene descriptions are the terms INT. and EXT. Those mean “interior” and “exterior”. They denote where the scene you're reading takes place. Some writers will then elaborate on the contents of the room or the appearance of the outside of a building, some will immediately move on to the next piece of the narrative puzzle which is most often action.”

“The next thing that throws some people off is “(O.S.)” or “(O.C.)”. If either one of those descriptions appears next to a characters lines the mean that they are “off camera” or “off screen.” This is usually used in reveals or when a characters' identity is being kept secret. Another common abbreviation you'll find next to characters' names is “(V.O)” for “voice over.”

Parentheticals are the words that appear in parentheses directly under a character's name, telling you something essential about the character's behavior. This something should use language that's visceral and can be seen. For instance, rather than writing “(angrily)” you would write “(screaming).”

Hopefully, I have provided enough guidance that you find this screenplay easy enough to read without Googling anything.

⁷ Swift, Liya. “Screenwriting 101: How to Read a Screenplay,” *RRFEDU.com*. Sep. 26, 2016. <https://www.rrfedu.com/blog/2016/09/26/screenwriting-101-read-screenplay/>

There are a few more things to keep in mind as you're reading these scripts. Just as Swift wrote above, screenplays are blueprints and novels. They are the blueprints for the production team when it comes to shooting and editing the project. As a result, the precision of the actions described or the characters introduced is not of incredible importance because the director (and other members of the team) should be given leeway to do what they think works best. Perhaps the most important components of the script are the dialogue, plotlines, and pacing. These are almost entirely determined by the writer.

Like novels, scripts are pieces of writing that tell stories. One major issue is that – barring first-person narration – the thoughts and motivations of characters cannot be communicated to readers unless explicitly written into actions or dialogue. Ah. Herein lies one of the biggest challenges of screenwriting – showing not telling. If you find yourself wanting to know more information about a character (e.g., their motivation, their appearance, their thoughts) – do what the production team would do and decide it for yourself. If your decision falls apart a few pages later, just revise it. Have fun reading it. I know I had fun writing it.

With all that being said: I hope you enjoy *Zeros*.

PILOT

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COLD OPEN

INT. VERIDIAN CAPITAL CONFERENCE ROOM 1

Interviewer's P.O.V.

Erik Bertelsen: Mid-40's. Very European

ERIK

Hi Cynthia. My name is Erik and I'd like to thank you for applying to Veridian and congratulate you on getting this far. Think of this interview as just us getting to know each other. I'll start. I'm sure you can tell from the accent, but I was born in...

INT. VERIDIAN CAPITAL CONFERENCE ROOM 2

Jared Russel: Mid-20's. Tired.

Jared looks over the candidate's resume. He circles "GPA: 3.97." Too bad there's not much else to look at.

JARED

I think your academic record speaks for itself, but how do you think you've been able to apply yourself in other areas?

INT. VERIDIAN CAPITAL CONFERENCE ROOM 1

We're back with Erik.

Erik underlines "Goldman Sachs - Summer Analyst" on the candidate's resume and adds a question mark along the margin.

ERIK

Be candid with me, Eugene. How did you work at Goldman the summer after your freshman year?

EUGENE

Well, uh, my uncle works in their private banking group in my hometown so I had the opportunity to gain early exposure to the finance industry.

ERIK
Interesting...

Just as he thought. Erik strikes out the Goldman line on Eugene's resume and inconspicuously scribbles "No way" on the top corner of his resume.

INT. VERIDIAN CAPITAL CONFERENCE ROOM 2

We're back with Jared.

JARED
So, says here you speak Spanish?

JOSEPH
Yup. Took four years of it in high school and got A.P. credit.

JARED
That's dope... So - tell me about what you did last summer at Whitis and Rosenbaum.

JOSEPH
Sure thing. I was-

JARED
In Spanish.

Jared raises his eyebrows and gives Joseph a suggestive look.

Joseph, flustered, can't think of a response.

JARED (CONT'D)
Hmm.

INT. VERIDIAN CAPITAL CONFERENCE ROOM 3

We're with Sandra.

Sandra Fung: early-30s. Chinese American.

SANDRA
So, David, you studied abroad in Mexico. I'm sure that was an awesome time. Tell me about that, I'm curious.

David Kirsch: 21. Charmer. Self-proclaimed "studious partier." Would fit in better at a state school but got a full-ride to an Ivy.

DAVID

Sure. So being from right outside San Diego, I grew up around Latin culture and I really missed it up in Connecticut...

While he's answering, Sandra writes "diversity?" atop David's resume.

INT. VERIDIAN CAPITAL CONFERENCE ROOM 4

We're with ROB

Rob Bosch: Early-50's. English with an elegant accent that makes him sound smart.

ROB

Listen, the fact is that Texas just isn't a competitive school. I don't care about how good of a deal you're getting or how close you are to your parents. How can you compete with the seven Ivy kids I'm meeting after you today?

Zach Potts: 20. Brown, slightly curly hair. Unassuming. Always the guy people are trying to "break out of his shell."

ZACH

I may not be a Harvard or a Wharton guy, but to me that's a good thing. Something those guys don't have that I do is the hustle. I had to work my, uh, tail off to even get to this seat right now. I'd like to think you want more, uh, tail-working-off people and less people who've had everything handed to them.

Rob nods. He knows Zach gets it.

ROB

Fewer.

ZACH

What?

ROB

Fewer people. You said less.

Rob smiles at Zach.

INT. VERIDIAN CAPITAL LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM

Erik, Jared, Rob, Sandra, a few other interviewers and NICOLE sit around a large conference table. They are worn out and ready to go home for the night.

Nicole Broadwell: Late 20's. Midwestern.

NICOLE

Alright guys, it's been a long day but we want to start giving out offers tomorrow so we need to wrap this up.

ERIK

Why do we have to pick so soon?

OTHER INTERVIEWER #1

Didn't you tell them that they'd hear in a week or two?

JARED

Come on let's give these kids a break. They worked hard today and I'm sure they're twice as nervous now as they were when they walked in-

ERIK

O.K. First of all, who invited this guy? Happy to finally be at the big boy table?

SANDRA

Oh, come on.

ERIK

All I'm saying is that I could have spent all day playing golf and eating sushi but instead I had to listen to university kids go on about how lifeguarding set them up for a career in finance.

NICOLE

Let's just take it name by name and I'm sure we'll be out of here in a jiff.

Erik rolls his eyes. No way that's true.

ERIK
I didn't spend the last 20 years
working my ass off to be held
hostage at my own work - by H.R.
nonetheless!

SANDRA
Erik!

ERIK
(sarcasm)
Oh, sorry. Human Capital
Management.

Everyone looks at Erik, waiting for - nay - praying for,
cooperation.

ERIK (CONT'D)
O.K. fine. I'll play along. Just
don't ask me to call any of them.

EXT. UT AUSTIN CAMPUS - HONORS QUAD - AFTERNOON

Zach hustles to class, work out from his flight home late the
night prior.

ZACH
Hello?

ERIK (O.S.)
Hi, is this Zach?

Rob is the only European person Zach knows. This call feels
like good news.

ZACH
Yeah this is he, um, speaking now.

If you can call that speaking. Zach is embarrassed.

ERIK (O.S.)
Hi Zach, it's Erik from Veridian.
We were impressed with you
yesterday and would like to extend
you an offer. H.R. will probably be
in touch next week, but you know,
who knows with them?

ZACH
(rushing)
Thank you so much.
(MORE)

ZACH (CONT'D)
It's great to hear from y'all and
it was great being at the office
and meeting everyone yesterday I
hope tha-

ERIK (O.S.)
Alright, take care now.

Rob disconnects the call and Zach jumps with excitement. He hits a student passing by in the face with his fist. He turns to her...

ZACH
Oh shit! I'm so sorry!

The student says nothing and walks away. Zach continues to celebrate.

ACT I

INT. ZACH'S NYU DORM - BEDROOM - MORNING

We're with Zach. Slowly opening his eyes, it hits him. Shit! He's overslept and it's his first day. He gasps for air --

ZACH
Shit.

Zach jumps out of bed haphazardly.

Cut to Zach brushing his teeth furiously. He eyes the floss... no time.

Cut to Zach putting on his navy suit pants and tucking a crisp white shirt into them. But wait -- where is his tie? No time to waste crying about spilled ties. He grabs one of his roommate's ties without looking and heads out the door while starting on a half Windsor.

EXT. MIDTOWN MANHATTAN - 51ST AND PARK - MORNING

Zach peers up at the majestic glass tower that is the Veridian Capital building. Without noticing, he steps into the crosswalk on a green light and almost gets clipped by a cabbie. While speeding by...

CABBIE (O.S.)
Hey! The light's green for fucks
sake!

Zach is speechless. A southern upbringing has not prepared him for this kind of treatment.

He gets out of the street and looks down at his tie for the first time since leaving the apartment to see it is covered in four leaf clovers.

ZACH
You've gotta be kidding.

INT. VERIDIAN CAPITAL - BOARD ROOM - MORNING

Zach tries his best to walk into the large board room unnoticed. It's no use, the walls are all glass anyway. Sandra and Rob eye him as they wrap up orienting the students. He makes extended eye contact with a PRETTY GIRL who gives him a look of sympathy.

SANDRA
(wrapping up)
You guys will learn a ton this summer. But that means we're gonna expect a lot from you as well. There's not gonna be any hand-holding, you'll get right into the action.

ROB
This isn't BlackRock.

Laughter from the room.

SANDRA
Alright! That said, please make your way to your groups and let me or Rob know if you have any questions.

Zach approaches Rob after the meeting. He's never been so embarrassed in his life. Rob doesn't break his step.

ZACH
Hey, Rob. I just wanted to sa-

Zach speeds up to keep pace with him as they walk through the office.

ROB
Zach, right?

Rob glances at Zach's tie.

ROB (CONT'D)
Good luck for your first day? How's that working out?

ZACH

Well, sir, I just wanted to apolog--

ROB

I've a fund meeting two minutes ago
on the 28th floor. Head to the
super-alternatives group and ask
for Walter.

Super-alternatives? Is that a euphemism for off-boarding?

Zach walks around the corner in search of his group...

INT. VERIDIAN CAPITAL - SAIMS OFFICE - DAY

Cut to Zach wandering into the east wing of the 26th floor.
He's relieved to see "Super-Alternative Investment
Management" in metallic lettering on the wall.

He spends a few seconds inspecting the space. A couple
conference rooms, glass offices along the walls, and a
sizable bullpen of cubicles in the center. Then...

David walks into the office - noticeably out of breath. He
eyes Zach looking almost as lost as he does and...

DAVID

Late on your first day?

Zach turns toward David.

ZACH

Was it that obvious?

DAVID

Takes one to know one. I'm David.

David puts out his hand.

ZACH

(relieved)

Zach. Any idea what we do now?

Meanwhile, in walks in Carolyn Foster: late-50s. Confident.
Tall. Dressed like a million bucks and worth even more. Would
have published her now-scraped memoir on professional female
empowerment but "that bitch" Sheryl Sandberg published hers
first.

As Carolyn marches by...

ZACH (CONT'D)

(to David)

Someone told me to ask for Walter.

Carolyn now several steps past the two boys...

CAROLYN
Ha! Walter hasn't shown up before
lunch since before he thought
E.T.F. was a new way to say W.T.F.

INT. VERIDIAN CAPITAL - CAROLYN'S OFFICE - DAY

Carolyn walks into her office and looks up at the two.

CAROLYN
In here, boys.

They shuffle in and she stands to greet them.

CAROLYN (CONT'D)
Carolyn Foster, and you are?

DAVID
David Kirsch.

ZACH
Zach Potts.

CAROLYN
Please - sit.

Carolyn sits first, followed by the two boys.

CAROLYN (CONT'D)
Welcome to the Super-Alternatives
group, or SAIMS. I joined the group
as co-P.M. with Walter after my
firm was acquired.

DAVID
Oh - cool!

Zach looks over at David. Where on Earth did this kid come from? Carolyn is a little surprised too.

CAROLYN
Well, that's one way to put it.
I was a minute late to my first
partners' meeting and the next
thing I knew I was off of high-
yield-

Carolyn pauses. She notices Zach's tie.

CAROLYN (CONT'D)
Why the...

Carolyn mimes putting on a tie.

ZACH
(nervous)
There was a little mix up this morning.

Damn. Not two minutes and he's already class clown.

CAROLYN
I'll say.

Carolyn can hardly look away from it. David is loving this. Laughing - silently, but obviously.

CAROLYN (CONT'D)
Anyway...

She refocuses and faces straight forward. Fun's over for David.

CAROLYN (CONT'D)
Many risky clients invest in alternative assets. Are you familiar?

ZACH
Like private equity?

Good job. Maybe Zach's back in the game.

CAROLYN
Exactly. What our group does is invest on behalf of clients who want something even riskier than that - hence the super. Think of it like a high octane hedge fund. Anyways, the other analysts are spread thin so we'll need you two to help with some of our smaller plays. We've got a quarter billion allocated for New Zealand and I'd like you guys to run with it.

Zach and David are even more confused now than they were when they walked in. There's a little bit of an awkward silence building. David leans forward a little...

DAVID
Could you tell us a little more about the-

Carolyn's phone starts ringing. She picks up without hesitation, raising a finger to David - "Wait". Carolyn starts on the phone...

CAROLYN
Good morning, Judy... Erik? What did he say it was about? Give me a second.

Carolyn shoos the boys out of her office and closes the door behind her.

INT. VERIDIAN CAPITAL - SAIMS OFFICE - DAY

The boys exit Carolyn's office and start walking towards the bullpen when in walks Jared.

JARED
What's up fellas? You must be the new SAIMs interns. It amazes me that interns still manage to show up late on their first day.

Jared puts out his hand. The boys put theirs out to meet him.

JARED (CONT'D)
Jared, I'm an assistant vice president on Carolyn's team.

ZACH
Zach.

DAVID
David.

Jared looks over at Zach's tie...

JARED
Good luck charm, or?

Zach laughs nervously.

ZACH
It's not quite living up to expectations.

Jared walks towards the bullpen and motions for Zach and David to follow him.

Jared shows Zach and David to their seats...

JARED

This is where you two will be sitting this summer. Have you met Carolyn yet?

DAVID

Yea, we were just in her office.

JARED

I'm sure it's seems very exciting, working at a big company in the hedge fund group.

He waits for a response.

DAVID

Oh, yeah.

JARED

Gonna be honest with you, it really isn't. You're probably imagining that this summer is going to be like Billions, aren't you?

David nods while Zach laughs.

JARED (CONT'D)

Well it isn't. Believe it or not Veridian manages way more than the guys on that show do. Doesn't stop us from feeling like zeros though.

Both the interns laugh.

JARED (CONT'D)

So, did Carolyn tell you guys anything else?

ZACH

Yeah. She mentioned something about New Zealand?

JARED

Cool, cool. Assuming she didn't explain anything else, I can fill you in.

INT. VERIDIAN CAPITAL - JARED'S DESK - DAY

Cut to Jared, Zach and David all around Jared's desk.

JARED

The New Zealand general election is at the end of the week and the currency markets are having a fit.

ZACH

And you think a populist victory will bring the currency down?

JARED

Bingo. N.Z. First has picked up some steam recently which is why people are nervous. But-- the opposite is true if Labour wins. It's your job to figure out which way it's going.

DAVID

And how should we go about doing that?

JARED

You're smart college students. You'll figure it out.

David and Zach step away from Jared's desk and head back toward their desks.

INT. VERIDIAN CAPITAL - SAIMS OFFICE - DAY

Cut to Zach and David walking towards their bullpen.

ZACH

I'll start some election research and you can start on some historical analysis if that works.

Before David has a chance to answer, he is intercepted by Gabriel Ellis: early-40s. African American. Shaved head and a well-manicured goatee.

GABRIEL

Hey. You're David, right?

DAVID

Um, it's David, sir.

GABRIEL

That'll do.

Gabriel speed walks ahead of David...

GABRIEL (CONT'D)
We're gonna be late, hurry up.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)
(to Zach, indirectly)
Nice tie, by the way!

David gives a confused, but excited look to Zach. Zach knows he'll never hear the end of this tie gag.

David follows Gabriel. He catches up and while walking through the office...

GABRIEL (CONT'D)
(with haste)
My name is Gabriel Ellis, I'm a managing director on the institutional sales side. I know your buddies at school may have told you that we just play golf and schmooze with clients all day. While I'm not denying that - I love my job - I'm the only reason you have any money to manage in the first place. How's your Spanish?

DAVID
Um... I don't speak Spanish, sir.

GABRIEL
Really? A Hispanic who doesn't speak Spanish. Go figure.

DAVID
(laughs nervously)
I'm... Not Hispanic either.

GABRIEL
Christ on sale - what do we even pay H.R. to do?

David and Gabriel stop in front of a conference room.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)
Luckily I always think ahead.

Gabriel pulls out a pin with the Mexican flag on it and hands it to David.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)
In there, you are David.

David starts putting the pin on his lapel.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)
The Chilean Economic and Social
Stabilization Fund left J.P. Morgan
last week because they didn't
"understand them" so we need to.
Work with me David.

Gabriel heads towards the door of the conference room.

DAVID
I mean no disrespect sir, but isn't
this a little insensitive?

Gabriel stops and turns back to David.

GABRIEL
Do I look like the kind of person
who could be insensitive, David?

Gabriel raises his eyebrows.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)
Now get in there and handle this
with some panache.

David and Gabriel walk...

INT. VERIDIAN CAPITAL - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

...into the conference room with half a dozen suited Chilean
men.

GABRIEL
Gentlemen. My name is Gabriel Ellis
and this is David. He's from
Mexico.

ACT II

INT. VERIDIAN CAPITAL - SAIMS BULLPEN - EVENING

We're back with Zach. He sits at his desk with an ear to his
phone.

ZACH
Mom - you're doing *what*!?

ZACH'S MOM (O.S.)
Giving all our savings away to
charity.

ZACH

Why on earth would you do that?

ZACH'S MOM (O.S.)

Your father and I just realized there are so many less fortunate than us.

ZACH

I thought you were going to help me pay off my loans? Please tell me you're still going to do that.

ZACH'S MOM (O.S.)

Nope. Sorry honey. Don't you have a high paying job now? You don't need our money.

ZACH

That's only if I get a return offer. I don't even know if I want to do this for a living yet. The people here aren't... the nicest.

Before Zach's mom gets a chance to answer, Jared approaches Zach, grabs the phone and hangs up the call.

ZACH (CONT'D)

Hey!

JARED

We're all going out. First day of summer tradition.

ZACH

Seriously? What about face time and all of that?

JARED

Your face needs to spend some time in a drink. Let's go.

Zach gets up and joins Jared on his way to the elevator.

JARED (CONT'D)

Where's the other kid?

ZACH

David? I haven't seen him since some guy took him this morning.

JARED

Oh well. If he knows what's good for him he'll show up.

EXT. SOHO - OUTSIDE A TRENDY CLUB - EVENING

Jared, Zach and a few other associates wait in line outside of the bar. A mean muggin', 250-lb bouncer is checking IDs outside of the bar. This looks like trouble.

ZACH

Um, Jared.

JARED

What's up dude?

ZACH

I'm... 20.

JARED

Don't worry about it. I wasn't 21 until I started full time. Plenty of ways around it.

Jared puts a hand on Zach's shoulder. Nothing to worry about bud. He gives a signal to two of the associates. They get the message.

Jared turns Zach around, flips Zach's collar up and starts removing that dastardly tie.

JARED (CONT'D)

In the meantime... This - has got to go.

They get little closer to the front. Zach's heart is pounding. One of the associates opens his wallet to show his ID to the bouncer. Here comes the short con. The associate drops his wallet in front of the bouncer.

ASSOCIATE

Whoops!

The associate bends down to pick it up. The bouncer looks down at him. Could you be wasting any more of my time? During that brief moment of distraction... Jared pushes Zach into the bar.

INT. SOHO - LE BAIN AT THE STANDARD - EVENING

Zach spends a few seconds taking it all in. Strobe lights. The club, full of well-dressed bankers. Models and bottles. A real deal bona fide New York club. *This* is what he'd had heard all about - and now he was a part of it.

Jared walks in behind Zach and pats him on the back. He waves a finger in the air toward the bar. Drinks are on the way.

JARED
See? No sweat.

ZACH
Thanks, by the way.

Jared picks up two shots of vodka and two shots of orange juice from a waiter. That was fast.

JARED
Don't worry about it.

He hands a set of shots to Zach.

JARED (CONT'D)
Shooters gotta shoot.

Zach didn't take too many shots in college, but he knows the drill. OJ, vodka, OJ. He sets the glasses down. Wait - Jared didn't take any shots.

Jared reaches out with the second set. Oh no.

ZACH
Oh no - you take 'em.

Jared pushes the shots a little harder. Come on Zach, don't be a loser. Alas, Zach rejects them once more. Jared sets them down on a bar top.

JARED
Veridian tradition. Two shots.
Goose and juice.

Jared takes a deep breath. Here we go. Shot of OJ, shot of vodka. Glasses down.

INT. SOHO - LE BAIN AT THE STANDARD - NIGHT

Cut to Zach and David by the crowded bar, drinks in hand. They can hardly hear each other over the music.

ZACH
You did what?

DAVID
One of the private bankers had me pretend to be Mexican so I could pitch these Chilean clients.

ZACH
That's crazy, but isn't that kind of... offensive?

DAVID

I don't know. Gabriel's black so I didn't really want to question it.

ZACH

Isn't *that* kind of offensive?

DAVID

Offensive or not, they scheduled a follow up with us tomorrow so I guess my... Latin charms

Zach laughs.

DAVID (CONT'D)

...must've got to them. So what did you get up to today?

ZACH

Oh, not much. My mom called and basically told me I'm being cut off.

DAVID

Eek. That's not great.

ZACH

Yeah. Not that I didn't before, but I *really* need to crush it this summer so I have a job to pay off my loans and stuff after graduation.

David's phone goes off. How did he hear it over all of the music?

DAVID

Speaking of moms - I gotta take this. Probably all worried about my first day.

David walks away and Zach raises his drink to him to say goodbye. He brings the straw to his mouth and tilts his glass... a little too far. Shit - a spill. I guess the liquor is hitting a little harder than he thought it was. Let's hope nobody saw.

He scans his surroundings. Doesn't look like anybody noticed until he spots that pretty girl from earlier...

Priya Simha: Tall. People have said that she is "super hot for an Indian girl" and she is totally over being known as such.

Their eyes meet. She lets out a little laugh and walks towards him and starts...

PRIYA

Pretty sure I'm the only one who saw.

ZACH

(sighing)

That's a relief. Don't wanna be known as "that intern who can't handle his stuff."

PRIYA

Oh don't worry - I'll be telling everyone about it at the office tomorrow.

Both laugh. Both are a little drunk.

PRIYA (CONT'D)

In the meantime, what're you drinking?

Priya waves her hand at one of the bartender. She flags him down pretty quickly. Why is it so much easier for women to get their attention?

ZACH

(to Priya)

Uh, Goose and juice?

PRIYA

(to the bartender)

Two...

What's the plural?

PRIYA (CONT'D)

...Gooses and juices?

Priya and Zach share a laugh. Goose and juices? Gooses and juice?

BARTENDER

Coming up.

PRIYA

Seriously? What'd you, read the douchebag's guide to Wall Street?

ZACH
You caught me. Aspiring leveraged
sell-out here... I'm Zach by the
way.

PRIYA
(smiling)
Pri.

INT. PRIYA'S NYU DORMITORY - PRIYA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

We're with Zach. He opens his eyes. He's alone in bed.
Someone else's bed.

Priya walks in to the tiny bedroom. Oh God.

PRIYA
(snide)
Sleep okay?

ZACH
Uh... Honestly not sure... Did we?

PRIYA
Do it?

She laughs.

PRIYA (CONT'D)
No.

Whew. That would've been bad. Zach gets out of bed and starts
putting his clothes back on.

ZACH
So how did I end up here?

PRIYA
You went *a little* hard on the sauce
last night. I tried taking you to
your place but you kept telling me
you lived in West Campus. Couldn't
find that anywhere in New York...

Zach rolls his eyes. How could he be so stupid?

PRIYA (CONT'D)
So I took you back here. I would've
put you on the couch but NYU didn't
even *give us* a couch so here we
are.

Zach, now fully clothed, sits on the bed. Fingers are massaging his forehead in disappointment and in hangover curement.

ZACH
I can't believe you went through
all the trouble.

Priya joins him on the bed.

PRIYA
(teasing)
Psh - Don't sweat it... Just make
sure Lily doesn't find out.

Now Zach is nervous.

ZACH
I mentioned Lily last night?

PRIYA
Mentioned? You basically spent
fifteen minutes telling me your
"how we met" story on repeat.

ZACH
Oh God. Sorry to put you through
that. That story isn't even
interesting.

PRIYA
(laughing)
No it is not. Too bad you didn't
seem to think so last night.

The two sit in silence for a second. Zach starts standing up and putting on his jacket.

ZACH
Well, I better get going. Don't
wanna be late two days in a row.

Nothing from Priya. Zach starts for the exit and looks back at Priya just before opening the door.

ZACH (CONT'D)
Thanks again for everything -- I
mean it.

PRIYA
Now at least we have a pretty
interesting "how we met" story.

Zach steps out and closes the door behind him. It's been a weird twelve hours.

INT. VERIDIAN CAPITAL - SAIMS ANALYST BULLPEN - MORNING

Cut to Zach making his way over to his desk. Doesn't look like he is the only one hungover from last night. Good. He tries to log on to his computer but is met with an error message. Seriously? Now this?

ZACH
(loudly)
Hey Jared.

JARED (O.S.)
Yea?

ZACH
I can't log on to my computer.

JARED (O.S.)
What are you, twelve?

Two days in and everyone on his team probably thinks he's an idiot. At least his tie is solid in color and appropriate today.

JARED (O.S. CONT'D) (CONT'D)
Just call Mustafa.

ZACH
Mustafa?

JARED (O.S.)
Yea, he's the I.T. guy -- super chill. His number should be somewhere near your desk.

Zach looks around the bullpen and notices a laminated sheet of paper on one of the cubicle walls. He looks down the list...finally finds the one that says "I.T." He picks up his desk phone.

INT. VERIDIAN CAPITAL - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

We're with Gabriel and David. They sit with four Chilean investors a conference table with marketing packets in hand. David wears his special pin and now a tie with the Mexican flag on it. A PowerPoint showing historical fund performances and other tidbits are displayed on a large TV at the front of the conference room. Gabriel references the slide...

GABRIEL

As you can see, from core fixed income to private equity, our funds consistently deliver.

CHILEAN #1

That's great, Mr. Ellis. Everybody likes good performance. But, I need to be straight with you.

GABRIEL

By all means...

Gabriel gives a look to David, as to say "we're losing them."

CHILEAN #1

Like all investors we want alpha, we want high Sharpe ratios, we want to minimize risk. The problem we face as *inversionistas federales* is that Chileans don't like us taking their capital out of the country. We know how unstable our domestic markets are, but they demand we stay there. It is quite the... *como se dice*... quandary? Our citizens were not happy with how we were investing with J.P. Morgan which is why we left. I see no proof that Veridian would be any better.

GABRIEL

I completely understand.

Gabriel doesn't know what to say, but David looks like he has a something to say. Gabriel starts opening his mouth to try and save the day but first...

CHILEAN #2

(to David)

David. ¿Qué piensa usted? Es latinoamericano. ¿qué haría usted en nuestra posición?

Gabriel is shocked. Nervous. Furious. He shows it, but just barely. David has absolutely no idea what was just said, only that it was directed to him.

GABRIEL

(leading)

David?

Thanks, jackass.

DAVID

Would you mind if we spoke in
English so he can understand?

Small nods of understand from the Chileans. Gabriel glances
over at David. What are you doing?

DAVID (CONT'D)

If you would turn your packets to
Appendix C, you'll see a few
hypothetical strategies that I-

Gabriel kicks David under the desk. Jackass.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Excuse me - Gabriel and I - modeled
after our meeting yesterday.

The Chileans and Gabriel take a few moments looking over
these "surprise slides." Meanwhile, David puts one up on the
screen.

DAVID (CONT'D)

As you can see, we can build
portfolios that involve primarily
trading directly on the *Bolsa de
Comercio de Santiago* --

Gabriel gives David a soft smile, saying "you happy with that
rendition of an accent"? Maybe feigning Mexican Spanish
wasn't the best idea. Who knows? Maybe Chileans also don't
know what Mexicans sound like.

DAVID (CONT'D)

The Santiago Exchange and other
LatAm exchanges. We can then use
protective derivatives to
neutralize our Latin American
market exposure and swap it for a
global equity position. Coming from
Mexico, I understand your
situation. However, with these
unique portfolios, you would
eliminate the geographic risk
without needing a capital flight
from the area... Obviously this can
work for other asset classes as
well.

CHILEAN #1

Impressive.

INT. VERIDIAN CAPITAL - GABRIEL'S OFFICE - DAY

Cut to Gabriel entering his office. David enters soon after. Both are celebrating.

GABRIEL
Where the hell did *that* come from
you jackass?

Figures.

DAVID
I came back to the office last
night and decided to-

GABRIEL
You know what? I don't even care.
Well done David - well done!

DAVID
It's David, sir.

GABRIEL
Not anymore it isn't.

INT. VERIDIAN CAPITAL - SAIMS BULLPEN - DAY

We're with Zach. He twiddles his thumbs in front of his desk, waiting. In walks Mustafa: mid-20s. South Asian. Uncomfortable in a suit and tie.

MUSTAFA
You called?

Zach looks up and turns to Mustafa.

ZACH
Yea, thanks for coming.

Zach reaches out with a hand to greet him.

ZACH (CONT'D)
Zach. Mustafa, right?

MUSTAFA
Mustafa, actually. What's the
problem?

Mustafa and Zach crowd around Zach's monitors.

ZACH
I think my credentials stopped
working or something -- won't let
me log on.

Mustafa motions to the chair Zach is sitting in...

MUSTAFA
Do you mind?

ZACH
Oh, not at all, go ahead.

Zach gets up and Mustafa takes a seat. Mustafa begins to type
and click...

MUSTAFA
This should only take a minute...
So... SAIMS?

ZACH
Yup.

MUSTAFA
Late on your first day?

Really? How is that a thing and how does everyone know about
it?

ZACH
Yup... What about you? How long
have you been at Veridian?

MUSTAFA
About three years.

ZACH
What made you interested in I.T.?

MUSTAFA
I'm not really interested, to be
honest. I put some money in Bitcoin
a while back and lucked out. I'm
still working because my parents
wouldn't let me retire at 20.

ZACH
Oh shit-

MUSTAFA
And... done.

Mustafa logs into Zach's computer and sees the tabs Zach has
open from the day before.

MUSTAFA (CONT'D)
Oh- the New Zealand election? You
on PredictIt?

ZACH
What?

MUSTAFA
PredictIt - the political binary
options platform?

Zach is confused. Mustafa pulls up the website.

MUSTAFA (CONT'D)
Check it out. You can buy binary
options for tons of political
outcomes... Let's take New Zealand.

Mustafa shows the screen to Zach. Displayed are the two
remaining candidates -- Coombe and Brassard -- and their
accompanying stats.

MUSTAFA (CONT'D)
Options on Brassard are going for
sixty-three cents right now, and
options on Coombe for thirty-seven.
Winner's options become worth a
dollar and the loser options will
expire worthless.

Mustafa might be on to something. Zach's thinking -- maybe
this can help with the investment plan.

ZACH
Can you get price histories?

MUSTAFA
It can take a little effort but I
can download them for you if you
want.

ZACH
That'd be awesome, Mustafa.

MUSTAFA
Mustafa, dude.

ZACH
Sorry. Mustafa.

INT. VERIDIAN CAPITAL - GABRIEL'S OFFICE - MORNING

Gabriel sits at his desk, filling out some paperwork. David walks by outside...

GABRIEL
In here, David!

David knows the nickname isn't going anywhere.

DAVID
What's up, Gabriel? I was just on my way to SAI-

GABRIEL
I just got off the phone with the Chileans. They're signing on as clients.

DAVID
That's great news! I'm glad, uh, we pulled through at the end there.

GABRIEL
Alright, let's not get cocky. And you're not off the hook yet.

Oh boy. David sits down across from Gabriel at his desk.

DAVID
What do you mean?

GABRIEL
The Chileans want you to be the analyst on their account. I'll be their banker, obviously, but they need you working on their portfolios. Sound good?

DAVID
Yea! Does this mean I'm off SAIMs?

Gabriel rolls his eyes. He laughs and lands in a smile.

GABRIEL
If Carolyn knew you were spending time with me in sales she'd have my balls - this has got to be our little secret. For the summer at least.

This is a little more responsibility than David was looking to have this summer. Will he have the time?

DAVID

Um... okay. I guess. Sounds great.

GABRIEL

David. You should be thanking me. Analysts spend years before they get the kind of client action you're going to get and you've been here, what? A week?

DAVID

Three days.

GABRIEL

Exactly. So don't take this like some undue burden -- I could find other, more grateful analysts to pretend they're Latino in a minute.

DAVID

Yes sir. I understand.

GABRIEL

Glad to hear it. Now get out of here -- can't have Carolyn getting any thoughts.

David gets up and exits the room and walks into the hallway and finally gets to...

INT. VERIDIAN CAPITAL - SAIMS BULLPEN - MORNING

...the bullpen to see Zach typing away. Zach looks beat. Doubtful he got even a little sleep last night. Zach notices David walk in.

ZACH

David - Come check this out.

David walks over to Zach's desk. Zach turns to see him. David notices the "designer bags" under his eyes. Rough.

DAVID

Woah dude. Have you even gone home?

ZACH

Couldn't. Up all night modeling this out.

Zach pulls up an Excel sheet with a line graph showing what looks like two lines that are essentially moving in tandem.

ZACH (CONT'D)
So there's this thing called
PredictIt where people can bet on
political events.

DAVID
Oh, like MyBookie?

ZACH
Yea! But for politics. I took the
price histories for Brassard and
Coombe and tried to see if they
correlated with the New Zealand
Dollar at all.

DAVID
And?

ZACH
Check this out.

Zach looks impressed with himself. David is very impressed
with Zach. Shocked, really.

DAVID
(loudly)
Jared?

JARED (O.S.)
What?

DAVID
Come check this out.

A few seconds later, Jared walks up to the computer screen.
He pulls up a chair...

JARED
So what is this? Kiwis spot price
on the left and on the right is...
Brassard Price?

Jared has no idea what he's looking at.

ZACH
It's a binary options price for a
Brassard victory.

JARED
Can we use it? It doesn't look like
it has predictive power.

ZACH

That's because you're looking at a lagging moving average of the price.

Jared gives Zach a confused look. David follows suit. Guess David didn't know what he was looking at after all. Not to worry - Zach is prepared to give them a lesson.

ZACH (CONT'D)

Currency markets before an election are inherently speculative, right?

JARED

Sure. Let's go with that.

The excitement is evident on Zach's face. He can't wait to blow their minds. He turns to face the screen and starts editing the excel file.

ZACH

That's what I was worried about initially - but PredictIt is even more speculative. Now - if you just chart a time series of the New Zealand Dollar and the options price, it's a little messy.

He shows them the chart he just explained. "Where is he going with this," they think.

ZACH (CONT'D)

But you can kind of see the currency following the general trend of the price - right?

He points it out with his finger on the screen. Now they're starting to get it. Damn... this could be huge.

ZACH (CONT'D)

So if you take a moving average of the options price to get rid of the noise and then set it back a day-

INT. VERIDIAN CAPITAL - CAROLYN'S OFFICE - LATER THAT DAY

Cut to Carolyn sitting behind her desk. She looks at her computer which shows the same chart Zach was showing David and Jared earlier. Zach, David and Jared sit in front of her desk - excited to share what they've found.

CAROLYN
(surprised)
It lines up almost perfectly!
Incredible! Nice job boys.

David knows it was all Zach. He gives Zach a look, saying
"sorry - you deserve the credit." Zach doesn't seem to mind.

CAROLYN (CONT'D)
Jared, show them how to get in
touch with the traders so they can
explain exactly what we're doing
here.

JARED
You got it.

The three boys get up and exit the office.

INT. VERIDIAN CAPITAL - SAIMS BULLPEN - NIGHT

Zach sits at his desk, completely worn out from being at the
office for over 36 hours. Carolyn exits her office and stops
by the bullpen...

CAROLYN
Really nice job today, Zach. That's
exactly the kind of work we like to
see from our analysts.

ZACH
Thanks, Carolyn.

CAROLYN
What are you still doing here?

ZACH
You know, just finishing up some
work.

CAROLYN
That's a lie and even I know it.
Head home - you look exhausted.

Carolyn walks back into her office. Zach says nothing. He
knows it's taboo on Wall Street to leave before the boss but
he can't help but feel that Carolyn is being genuine. He
starts packing up his stuff.

END OF SHOW

CLOUT CHASING

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COLD OPEN

INT. VERIDIAN OFFICE BUILDING - AFTERNOON

Jared is exchanging messages with another associate over Skype for Business. We see their P.O.V.s of their computer screens.

ASSOCIATE (MESSAGE)
Plans for the weekend?

JARED (MESSAGE)
Might end up going to the CID
concert if I can get tickets.

ASSOCIATE
Let me just check Clout rq.

JARED
Lmao don't I already tried. Have
you seen this new update?

ASSOCIATE
One sec.

ASSOCIATE (CONT'D)
How do I even navigate this?

JARED
Don't ask me. I already deleted it.

ASSOCIATE
I might too.

JARED
Good. Short CLWT.

INT. SITUATION ROOM - NIGHT

A COMPLIANCE OFFICER sits at his desk. He's wearing a windbreak, like one an FBI agent might wear. We hear a PING coming from his desktop.

COMPLIANCE OFFICER #1
Ooh. What've we got here?

The compliance officer gets excited.

COMPLIANCE OFFICER #1 (CONT'D)
Hey! Jim! Check this out!

Another compliance officer joins his co-worker. He leans over his shoulder and reads what's on his screen.

COMPLIANCE OFFICER #1 (CONT'D)
What does it look like?

JIM
Well, Pete, looks like we've got ourselves a ball game.

We're now looking from Jim's P.O.V. and see Jared's message on the screen, reading "Short CLWT." The two join together in diabolical laughter.

ACT I

INT. VERIDIAN OFFICE BUILDING - MORNING

Zach walks into the office, marching to the rhythm of the upbeat music on his AirPods. He's having a jolly good time. He takes one of his AirPods out as he reaches David's desk and the music pauses.

DAVID
New headphones? Don't tell me you got AirPods?!

ZACH
Yeah, they're pretty dope not gonna lie.

DAVID
Wow, you're a bona fide Pod Head now aren't you?

ZACH
A what?

DAVID
A Pod Head?

Zach gives a confused look.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Like a pothead but AirPods? I'm really having to walk you to the door on this one, Zach.

ZACH
No I get it. It's just not funny.

DAVID
You wound me, sir.

They share a laugh.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Anyway, what do you think about me
cancelling my gym membership?

ZACH
At that cult-y place? What's it
called again? Equi-something?

DAVID
Equifax.

ZACH
Wait seriously? Like the credit
score thing?

DAVID
Well since the data breach they've
had to diversify their business and
I guess they thought luxury gyms
were a good idea.

ZACH
Huh. You don't say? Anyway, why are
you going to cancel?

DAVID
It's a hundred dollars a week.

ZACH
What?! A week?!

DAVID
I know, right?

ZACH
Well good luck with your impending
poverty... Those memberships are
uncancellable.

Zach puts his AirPods back in and starts walking to his desk.

DAVID
I'm not worried.

As Zach is walking to his desk he passes Erik who is also
wearing AirPods. After Erik passes Zach, he does a double
take.

David picks up his desk phone and hits in the number for
Equifax. After a few rings a woman picks up on the other
line.

EQUIFAX EMPLOYEE (O.S.)
Hi, Equifax Gramercy. How can I
help you today?

DAVID
Hi, my name is David Hirsch and I
joined you guys for the summer and
I'm just realizing that I don't
really have the time.

EQUIFAX EMPLOYEE (O.S.)
Oh well that shouldn't be a
problem. We'll just need you to
come in and speak with one of our
membership agents.

DAVID
Great. I'll come in tomorrow
morning.

EQUIFAX EMPLOYEE (O.S.)
See you then!

David disconnects.

DAVID
(mocking Zach)
It's kind of a bitch. It's
uncancellable.

DAVID (CONT'D)
(normally)
Shut up, Zach.

INT. COMPLIANCE CONFERENCE ROOM - AFTERNOON

Jared knocks on the door of and then enters a compliance
office conference room. He is confused by the layout. It
looks more like an interrogation room than a conference room
with dim lighting and a single table with a single chair on
one side and two chairs on the opposing side.

JARED
Hello?

Jim and Pete enter the room and shut the door forcefully
behind them.

JARED (CONT'D)
I got an email that I had to come
here at one-thirty. You know
anything about that?

The officers approach the table. Jim motions to the chair.

JIM
Please, sit.

Jared sits and the officers sit on the opposite side.

PETE
I assume you know why you're here?

JARED
Did you not just hear me?

PETE
Alright. No need to be rude.

JARED
Sorry, I just have *actual* work to do.

JIM
You don't think the work we do in compliance is "actual"?

JARED
To be honest, no. Can we just get this show on the road so I can get back to my job.

Jim stands up angrily and raises his voice.

JIM
Do you think that this is a joke?

Jared is unfazed.

JARED
Not so much a joke as it is a waste of my time, but sure, it's a joke too.

Pete stands up and raises his voice.

PETE
Well I don't think you'll be laughing when you do ten to twenty in a federal penitentiary for insider trading.

Jared raises his voice now.

JARED
What? That's what this is about?

JIM
Mhm. Look right here.

Jim passes a sheet of paper with screenshots of Jared's messages on them to Jared.

JIM (CONT'D)
Right here. "Short C.L.W.T"

JARED
Clout. It's pronounced Clout.

JIM
Aha! So you *did* short it!

JARED
No, I just know what is it. It's an artist booking and ticket buying app.

PETE
Likely story, Jared.

Jared rolls his eyes.

JARED
Listen, I don't even own Clout.
That was obviously a joke. Check my accounts.

PETE
Oh we will don't you worry. Given your... *attitude* and lack of cooperation we will have to conduct a thorough investigation.

Pete and Jim head for the door. Jared rubs his temples.

JARED
(under breath)
Jesus Christ these guys are idiots.

The compliance officers exit and shut the door behind them.
There is a moment of silence.

JARED (CONT'D)
Can I leave?

No answer.

INT. VERIDIAN ELEVATOR BANK - EVENING

Zach is waiting by the elevator bank to go home for the day. It's quiet. He's alone. Something doesn't feel quite right. Suddenly, we see a hand grab his shoulder! No worries - it's Erik.

ERIK

Zach. How are you?

ZACH

I'm good. How about you sir?

The elevator opens. The two of them step in.

ERIK

Oh, I'm all right. Say, did I see you wearing AirPods this morning?

ZACH

Uh, yeah. I just got them yesterday.

ERIK

Cool. I also have a pair.

ZACH

Uhh... Cool.

ERIK

We should grab a drink tomorrow after work if you're up for it.

ZACH

O.K.

The elevator reaches the first floor and Erik steps out. Zach stays in for a second to collect his thoughts. That was weird, wasn't it?

INT. EQUIFAX GRAMERCY FRONT DESK - MORNING

David walks into Equifax and approaches the FRONT DESK WOMAN.

DAVID

Hi.

FRONT DESK WOMAN

Good morning, David.

DAVID

I called yesterday about cancelling my membership?

FRONT DESK WOMAN
Okay. Just give me one second to
see which of our membership agents
is in this morning.

She dials a few numbers on the front desk phone and picks it up. They're waiting a short while. David glances over at the phone cord and sees that it isn't plugged into the wall.

FRONT DESK WOMAN (CONT'D)
Looks like all of our membership
agents are busy right now.

DAVID
Seriously? When will they be free?

FRONT DESK WOMAN
When do you have to be into work
this morning?

DAVID
In about half an hour, why?

FRONT DESK WOMAN
Ooh, sorry. That's exactly when one
of them has some free time.

DAVID
Are you serious?

FRONT DESK WOMAN
Unfortunately yes. Don't worry
though, let me give you the
manager's phone number.

She picks up a business card and starts writing on it.

FRONT DESK WOMAN (CONT'D)
Just call him later this afternoon
to talk about your membership. I've
also written his direct line so you
can get straight to him.

She hands David the card.

DAVID
Uh. Thanks.

David looks down at the card.

INT. COMPLIANCE OFFICE CONFERENCE ROOM - UNKNOWN TIME

Jared is sitting down with the compliance officers as the officers begin to pack up.

JIM

Thanks for being a little more cooperative this time, Jared. The more accommodative you are, the easier this whole thing will be.

JARED

Yeah, about that. Am I gonna have to keep coming down here all the time? It's a bit of a hassle.

JIM

So you don't like having to come down here?

JARED

Nope.

Jim glances at Pete. Pete raises his eyebrows suggestively.

JIM

Alright, Jared. Just wait here for a minute.

Jim and Pete exit the conference room. There is faint giggling.

Some time goes by off-screen. Jared is bored. He eventually gets up and heads for the door. It's locked.

JARED

Come on, guys. Seriously?

He jiggles the handle some more.

JARED (CONT'D)

Very funny. Now let me out.

No response. He starts yelling and banging on the door. It's futile. He turns around and runs his hand through his hair.

JARED (CONT'D)

Can I, at least get something to eat?

A slot opens at the bottom of the door and a peanut butter and jelly sandwich on a plate is slid under. The slot is promptly shut. Jared races to it and starts scarfing it down.

INT. MIDTOWN BAR - EVENING

Zach and Erik are sitting in a relatively busy Midtown bar, sipping on some drinks. It's dimly lit, chic.

ERIK
So you like working on the Super
Alternatives Team?

ZACH
Oh, yeah. It's only been a couple
weeks but I've already learned so
much. It's like, nothing like what
I learn in my classes at school.

ERIK
That's great, Zach. Truly.

Erik takes a sip of his drink.

ERIK (CONT'D)
I'll be honest, I'm a little upset
I didn't get an analyst for the
summer. We usually get at least one
on my commodities team. Oh well.
H.R. always seems to find new ways
to make my life harder.

There's a short silence.

ZACH
I'll be honest, I don't know how
I'm supposed to respond to that.

ERIK
Does H.R. not also piss you off?

ZACH
Um... No?

ERIK
Oh. Very well. Anyway, how do you
like those AirPods?

Zach is confused.

ZACH
They're great. They work really
well with the phone.

ERIK
I *know* right? They're just so
perfect.

(MORE)

ERIK (CONT'D)
Some people think they make you
seem arrogant or silly, but I think
they're just jealous.

ZACH
Sure. That could be it.

ERIK
So you like them?

ZACH
Yes?

ERIK
And you're definitely not going to
return them?

ZACH
No...

ERIK
Excellent...

There's another short silence.

ZACH
I'm gonna to run to the bathroom.

Zach gets up and heads toward the bathroom. As he enters the bathroom we see a hand holding a chloroform-soaked rag cover his mouth. Fade to black.

ACT II

INT. POD HEAD SOCIETY LAIR - EARLY MORNING

Zach is sitting down blindfolded and tied to a chair. Everything is made of limestone and there are ornate carvings of AirPods and other Apple products. There is no natural lighting, just torches. Typical underground society lair with an Apple twist. In front of him are a dozen or so people, all in robes.

One of the ROBED CULTISTS takes Zach's blindfold off.

ROBED CULTIST #1
(ominous voice)
Welcome... To the Pod Head Society!

ZACH
Wait, seriously?

There's a brief pause.

ROBED CULTIST #1
Yes! Behold all of our clandestine
glory!

ZACH
Pod Heads are a real thing?

There is nervous murmuring among the other cultists. How
could people have discovered this secret society? One of them
steps forward.

ROBED CULTIST #2
You mean to tell me that wired-folk
know of our ways?

ZACH
Erik?

ERIK (ROBED CULTIST #2)
Uhh.

ZACH
Anyway, no, people don't know. It's
a fairly simple pun.

Someone from the crowd-

ROBED CULTIST #3
How dare he insult our holy, long-
standing traditions as simple.

Zach laughs.

ZACH
Long-standing? Didn't AirPods come
out like a year ago?

ROBED CULTIST #1
December 2016... to be precise.

ZACH
Yeah. That was *basically* like a
year ago.

More murmuring from the crowd.

ZACH (CONT'D)
Wait a second. How did you guys put
all of this together that quickly?
I can't imagine limestone caves and
AirPod carvings are available in
short order like this.

ROBED CULTIST #1
 Nevermind that. We are the Pod Head
 Society - a secret organization
 tasked with protecting the
 integrity of the sacred hardware
 and promoting its ubiquity
 throughout the world.

Zach continues to laugh.

ROBED CULTIST #1 (CONT'D)
 What is so funny?

ZACH
 Nothing. This is just, like,
 exactly what people on Twitter
 think people with AirPods do in
 their spare time. Like *spot on*.

ERIK
 No chance.

ZACH
 No, seriously. I'll show you if you
 untie me.

Two of the robed people untie Zach. Zach pulls out his phone
 and waves it around.

ZACH (CONT'D)
 I'm not getting any service down
 here. Any chance you have WiFi?

ROBED CULTIST #3
 Of course we have WiFi. We're a
 secret society not... I don't know,
 Amish?

Zach is clicking away on his phone.

ZACH
 Did you guys seriously name the
 WiFi "Pod Heads Unite"? And you
 call yourselves a secret society?
 Please.

ROBED CULTIST #3
 Seriously Dennis? That's *still the*
 name?

DENNIS (ROBED CULTIST #1)
 (normal voice)
 Oh come on Alicia, it was your
 idea.

(MORE)

DENNIS (ROBED CULTIST #1) (CONT'D)
It's just such a hassle to change
you know. You have to call A.T.&.T
and then they put you on hold and
then it's just phone tag all
afternoon! I have a life, you know.

ALICIA (ROBED CULTIST #2)
We're trying to live in a secret
society here, Dennis!

DENNIS
You know what? I think I might just
have to tell everybody about-

ZACH
Password, guys?

DENNIS
Oh, it's uh, 1.2...3.4.5.

ZACH
Come on.

No words from Dennis or Alicia.

ZACH (CONT'D)
Well anyway, here's one of the
memes.

He hands the phone to Dennis who shows it to Alicia. It's a
Tweet with the caption "People with AirPods initiating their
fellow brethren when they get their own pair" attached to a
photo of robed people holding torches circling around someone
who is tied up.

Silence.

ZACH (CONT'D)
Anyway... What is it you guys do?

ALICIA
We basically just do drugs and go
clubbing.

ZACH
Hmm. Cool.

ALICIA
Oh. And make fun of poor people.

INT. COMPLIANCE CONFERENCE ROOM

Jared is looking exhausted, having spent the night in the interrogation room. Jim and Pete re-enter.

JIM
Get up and come with us.

JARED
Oh thank God.

He follows him out of the room.

INT. COMPLIANCE HOLDING ROOM

JIM
You'll be meeting with Carolyn in
about half an hour so wait here.
You also get your one phone call.

Jim motions to the phone on the nearby wall. Jim and Pete walk away. Jared rushes over to the phone and dials a number. It starts ringing.

INT. MEATPACKING DISTRICT NIGHTCLUB

Zach is dancing his heart out with his AirPods in. He is surrounded by all of his new Pod Head Society friends in a swanky Midtown nightclub. He's having the time of his life.

Zach hears his phone go off and it interrupts his music. It's an unknown number so he doesn't pick up. But he makes note of the time.

ZACH
What! 10 A.M.?

He looks around and spots Erik in the crowd.

ZACH (CONT'D)
Hey Erik!

Nothing.

ZACH (CONT'D)
(louder)
Erik!

Erik turns to Zach and pulls out one of his AirPods.

ZACH (CONT'D)
Don't you think I should be getting
back to the office? It's already
ten in the morning and I'm an
intern so.

ERIK
Don't worry about it. I've got you
covered.

ZACH
Are you sure?

ERIK
Oh yeah. You're a Pod Head now,
Zach. You don't have to worry about
simple things like work or
promptness. I can guarantee your
return offer as long as you're in
the society.

Zach makes a surprised but happy face.

INT. COMPLIANCE HOLDING ROOM

Jared slams the phone down.

JARED
God damn it!

He goes to dial another number. Just then Pete walks in.

PETE
Nope, just one call.

JARED
Please, Pete. I need this.

PETE
No can do.

JARED
Come on. I'm hungry, I'm tired, I
haven't seen sunlight in who knows
how long. Not to mention a toilet.

Pete says nothing.

JARED (CONT'D)
Please. I don't know how to beg,
but believe me, this is me begging.

PETE

Fine. One more call but that's it.

Jared quickly dials another number. It starts ringing. No answer.

JARED

Where the fuck are all the interns!

INT. VERIDIAN OFFICE BUILDING

David is nonchalantly leaning back in his chair in the office.

DAVID

Zach wasn't kidding. This cancellation has been a bitch. Ten minutes on hold for the manager's office?

His phone goes off - he has another call waiting from compliance. We know it's Jared -- but he doesn't.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Sorry random number, I've been on hold for way too long.

He hangs up on the incoming call. He's waiting for a little while longer. Finally someone picks up.

EQUIFAX EMPLOYEE (O.S.)

Hi, Equifax Gramercy, this is Becca at the front desk. How can I help you this afternoon?

DAVID

What!?

David hangs up. He looks at the card at the second number the front desk women had written earlier.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Guess it's gonna be the manager's cell phone.

He dials the number. He's met with that error sound-

ANSWERING MACHINE (O.S.)

I'm sorry. The number you have dialed is no longer in service.

He slams the phone on his desk. He screams.

INT. COMPLIANCE OFFICE - NOON

Jared looks down at his clothes and sees that he looks a little gross.

JARED

Eek. Can't meet Carolyn looking like this. Any chance I can get a fresh set of clothes?

Pete is still standing nearby.

PETE

Hey Jim, got any extra clothes?

Jim looks around at his desk for a second.

JIM

Yeah, I've got something.

INT. VERIDIAN OFFICE BUILDING - NOON

Zach stumbles into the office with only one of his AirPods in. Eyes droopy, clearly still a little buzzed. He walks up to David's desk.

ZACH

What up, chief?

DAVID

Bro it's twelve-thirty-five. Where have you been?

Zach's knees buckle slightly and he takes a second to respond.

ZACH

Don't worry about what goes on at the top.

David rolls his eyes.

DAVID

Whatever you say man. Where's your other AirPod?

ZACH

What?

DAVID

Well you've only got one in, so.

Zach touches his ear and notices the distinct lack of AirPods in it. His eyes widen. He starts running toward the elevator as he sees Erik stepping into one.

ZACH
Erik! Hold it!

Erik ignores him and the elevator closes without him on it.

ACT III

INT. NORMAL COMPLIANCE CONFERENCE ROOM - AFTERNOON

Carolyn sits alone in a conference room eating a to-go salad. There are two fashionable grain-bowls sitting on the table as well. Jim and Pete enter the room and sit down. Jared follows shortly after wearing an orange jumpsuit.

Carolyn laughs audibly.

CAROLYN
Excuse me? What's all this?

JARED
It's the only clothes they had.

Carolyn laughs even louder.

CAROLYN
You look like a prisoner.

JIM
Yeah, that's our bad. The only clothes we had lying around were our buddy's ski suit.

CAROLYN
Why did you need clothes? How long have they been holding you?

JARED
I don't know. Thirty-six hours?

CAROLYN
Jesus. Are they feeding you at least?

Jared says nothing.

CAROLYN (CONT'D)
Dear Lord. Are you serious?

She turns toward Jim and Pete. Angry.

CAROLYN (CONT'D)
You have been feeding him, right?

Jim and Pete shrug.

CAROLYN (CONT'D)
Well what have you been doing?

PETE
Our jobs, miss.

CAROLYN
Please. Compliance guys... What
real work are you even doing?
Jared, I'm sure this all just a
misunderstanding. I'll sort it out
don't worry.

She grabs one of the grain bowls.

CAROLYN (CONT'D)
And it looks like they brought
lunch so that's a start.

Jim and Pete look at each other.

JIM
Actually, those lunches are for us.

Jim pulls the bowl away from Carolyn and opens it. He puts
the other one in front of Pete and begins eating.

PETE
One second.

Pete hits the intercom in the center of the table.

PETE (CONT'D)
Hey, Sheila.

SHEILA (O.S.)
Yes, Pete.

PETE
Can we get another lunch in here?

SHEILA (O.S.)
I'll have to check if we have any
left.

PETE
Thank you.

Pete picks up a briefcase from the ground and places it on the conference room table. He opens it up and takes out a thick stack of papers.

PETE (CONT'D)

These are all of the messages from the last three months between Jared and the other associate, Chelsea. We'd like you to look over them and tell us if you think there's any reason we need to continue this investigation.

Carolyn grabs the papers from Pete. She begins leafing through them. Pete starts eating.

CAROLYN

O.K. I'm sure this is just a misunderstanding.

SHEILA enters the conference room with a metal tray full of what looks like cafeteria food. She sets it down in front of Jared.

SHEILA

Sorry. We're all out of those grain bowls.

Jared rolls his eyes. He begrudgingly picks up a spoon and begins eating.

PETE

Sorry. We tried.

CAROLYN

(under breath)

The only thing bigger than Carolyn's ego is the stick up her-

Carolyn's eyes widen.

JARED

Oh shit.

Carolyn continues leafing through the papers.

CAROLYN

B.R.B. I've got my performance review with the-

Carolyn's eyes widen again.

CAROLYN (CONT'D)
(louder)
Wicked Witch of the Upper East
Side?

Jared puts his head down in defeat. Jim and Pete feel second-hand embarrassment.

CAROLYN (CONT'D)
(almost yelling)
She's being such a... See you next
Tuesday?!

Carolyn takes a breath.

CAROLYN (CONT'D)
Jared do you and Chelsea do
anything but speak ill of me on
Messenger?

Jared shrugs.

JARED
It's better than insider trading?

CAROLYN
You know, I'm not sure it is.

Carolyn stands abruptly.

CAROLYN (CONT'D)
Gentlemen, I think you should
investigate this man to the full
extent of the law. Or whatever
extent is... the most.

Carolyn storms out. Pete laughs quietly after she leaves.

PETE
Well *that* did *not* go well for you
did it?

JARED
I'm gonna die in here aren't I.

PETE
You might. You heard the lady.

JARED
Can't I just go to the S.E.C.?
They'll know what they're doing at
least.

PETE

Oh, I wouldn't go to the S.E.C. if I were you.

JARED

Why's that?

Pete and Jim stand up.

PETE

That's enough questions. We got stuff to do. Come on, Jim.

Pete and Jim exit the room.

Jared puts his head down and feigns weeping.

EXT. PARK AVENUE OFFICE DISTRICT - AFTERNOON

Zach is retracing his steps on Park Avenue in search of his AirPods. He notices a group of fellow Pod Heads walking toward him and he calls out to them.

ZACH

Guys!

They see him and wave. He turns and points to his ear that is lacking an AirPods. They immediately stop smiling and stop waving. They turn around and start speed-walking in the opposite direction.

ZACH (CONT'D)

Hey! Where are you going?

They continue fleeing from Zach

ZACH (CONT'D)

Oh God.

Zach pulls out his cell phone and dials for David. He picks up.

ZACH (CONT'D)

Hey, David. I'm gonna tell you something and it's gonna sound weird but I'm gonna need you to just bear with me.

DAVID (O.S.)

What's up?

ZACH

(quickly)

So PodHeads are a real thing. It's a secret society for people with AirPods and it's super cool and they party all day and night and I was in it but I lost one of my AirPods and now they're gonna kick me out and I won't get a return offer and then I'll be one of those losers who can't pay off his student loans! I need to find that Pod.

DAVID

Slow down, Chief. All that ridiculous shit you just said aside... We're gonna find that AirPod.

EXT. MEATPACKING DISTRICT NIGHTCLUB

Zach and David stand outside the club Zach was partying in earlier. They can hear muted electronic dance music.

DAVID

Seriously? This is where you were all night?

ZACH

I know. Pretty lit, right? I think I might have left my Pod inside.

The two approach the BOUNCER standing in front of the club.

BOUNCER

Alright fellas, lemme see some I.Ds.

David pulls out his wallet and hands the bouncer his I.D.

BOUNCER (CONT'D)

Pshh. You serious?

ZACH

Don't mind him. He's an idiot.

David looks at Zach with anger. Zach pulls out his AirPod case and hands it to the bouncer. The bouncer opens up the case - only one AirPod.

BOUNCER

I'm sorry. You know I can't accept this.

ZACH

Oh come on. I have the one! I think I left the other one inside.

BOUNCER

If I had a nickel for every time I heard that.

DAVID

Wait, for real? People have *actually* used that excuse before?

Zach quickly turns toward David.

ZACH

It's not an excuse.

BOUNCER

Yes, it is. And we get it. A *lot*. Look, I'm just doing my job. You got a complaint? Take it up with them.

The bouncer pulls out a business card and hands it to Zach. It just reads "200 Vesey Street."

ZACH

God damn it. Guess we gotta go here.

David looks at the business card.

DAVID

Vesey Street? That's all the way downtown. Can we stop at Equifax before? I *need* to cancel my membership once and for all.

ZACH

Sure. Why not?

EXT. EQUIFAX GRAMERCY

Zach and David stand outside of a boarded up building. It looks like it's been closed for years. There are cockroaches, decaying wood, and general dilapidation.

DAVID
(in disbelief)
Oh my God I'm going to be homeless.

ZACH
This is your swanky gym? It looks
like a crack den.

David runs up to the building's door and starts banging on it.

ZACH (CONT'D)
Is that what this has been about
the whole time? Are you doing crack
now? It's o.k., just be honest with
me dude.

DAVID
No, Zach. I'm not doing crack.
These guys are just trying to fuck
with me so I can't cancel my
membership.

ZACH
This seems like an awful lot of
effort to stop one person from
cancelling their membership.

DAVID
Oh I don't put it past these
fuckers.

ZACH
Whatever you say, crack head.

David looks at the ground and notices a sticky note that had fallen off the building. He picks it up.

DAVID
Hey Zach, come check this out.

Zach walks up to the door where David is standing.

ZACH
What is it?

DAVID
(under his breath)
For inquiries go to two-hundred
Vesey Street.

David turns to Zach.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Hey, what was the address that the
bouncer gave you?

ZACH
Two-hundred Vesey Street. Why?

DAVID
Check this out.

He shows Zach the sticky note. They both look very confused.

INT. S.E.C. NEW YORK CITY HEADQUARTERS - MORNING

Jared enters the lobby of a very official-looking government building. He is still in his orange jumpsuit. He approaches the CONCIERGE on the first floor.

CONCIERGE
What're you in for?

JARED
Insider trading.

CONCIERGE
Oh. Well this is awkward.

There's a brief pause.

JARED
What?

CONCIERGE
We don't really handle that
anymore.

JARED
What do you mean you don't really
handle that? You're the S.E.C.

CONCIERGE
Well the current administration
found that we were so bad at
handling it in the first place that
they've got us covering other
things these days.

JARED
Like what?

CONCIERGE

Oh, the typical stuff. You know how sometimes your engine light comes on and you don't know why? Or how your ceiling fan will start making a clicking noise sometimes?

JARED

Sure.

Other people begin lining up behind Jared.

CONCIERGE

Well that kind of stuff.

JARED

Are you fucking with me?

CONCIERGE

No sir.

JARED

So what do I do?

CONCIERGE

About the insider trading?

Jared nods sarcastically.

CONCIERGE (CONT'D)

Your company's internal compliance group should be able to handle that.

JARED

No, please. I can't go back there.

CONCIERGE

I'm sorry. That's just the way it works.

JARED

Come on - you're the S.E. freaking C. for crying out loud.

CONCIERGE

Yes we are. And we're very busy handling *actual* problems so if you wouldn't mind.

The concierge motions to Jared to step aside. The person behind Jared steps up.

CONCIERGE (CONT'D)
And how may I help you, sir?

Jared walks away.

DENNIS
I need to change my WiFi network
name and password.

As he's walking away he notices David and Zach standing in
the line.

JARED
Zach? David? Did you get dragged in
for insider trading too?

ZACH
What? No. Did you?

The line is progressing.

JARED
Well yeah. Why else would I be at
the S.E.C.?

DAVID
(surprised)
This is the S.E.C.?

JARED
Uhh. Yes.

DAVID
Zach - why are we here?

ZACH
I don't know. It's where they told
us to go.

They're at the front of the line right now.

CONCIERGE
How can I help you today, sir?

DAVID
Uhh... Equifax membersh-

CONCIERGE
Posh gym membership cancellations,
floor four.

The concierge tears a security pass for David and hands it to
him.

CONCIERGE (CONT'D)
How can I help you?

ZACH
Um. Lost AirPods?

CONCIERGE
Ah. Seeing a lot of traffic in the
lost Apple products group recently.
Floor seven.

He prints a security slip for Zach and hands it to him. Zach
and David head toward the elevators.

ZACH
See ya!

Jared waves back, clearly a little upset. He looks outside
and sees Jim and Pete entering the building.

JARED
No, no, no.

He begins to run in the other direction before being
handcuffed by the concierge to a bench. Jim and Pete
approach.

CONCIERGE
He's pretty rude, this one.

JIM
We were thinking the same thing.
It's like, just cooperate, you
know? Anyway, sorry for the
trouble.

CONCIERGE
Oh, don't worry about it.

Jim and Pete look down at Jared.

PETE
You know, I could so eat right now.

JIM
Me too.

PETE
I heard a Dig Inn just opened
around the corner from here.

JIM
You don't say?

PETE

Yeah. The line's gonna get pretty rough if we don't get there soon, though.

They give each other a suggestive look and then, in unison, leave Jared handcuffed in the lobby and head out.

END OF SHOW

WEEKEND AT LOUIE'S

Written by

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COLD OPEN

INT. BLUERIDGE CAPITAL PARTNERS OFFICE BUILDING - AFTERNOON

Gabriel rushes through the lobby of a large office building in the middle of the morning rush.

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM

GABRIEL

Columbia University's endowment is looking for a new international equity fund manager and as head of institutional sales at Veridian I've got to get their business. Thanks to *my* schmoozing skills, we're currently in the lead. BlueRidge is our only competition and I just happen to know that they have a meeting this afternoon. I thought I'd stop by and do a little recon.

INT. BLUERIDGE CAPITAL PARTNERS OFFICE BUILDING

Gabriel approaches the security turnstiles and hesitates. He turns to the white SECURITY GUARD and

GABRIEL

(smirking)

I left my pass upstairs yesterday. Could you... let me in?

SECURITY GUARD

No chance, buddy.

GABRIEL

Come on, I'm late for a meeting.

SECURITY GUARD

I can call your receptionist for you and they can let you up. Where'd you say you worked?

GABRIEL

BlueRidge. And I've worked there, in this building, for a dozen years. Do you have any idea how embarrassing it would be if you did that?

SECURITY GUARD
Twelve years? I've never seen you
before.

The security guard hits the extension on his phone for
BlueRidge. It's dialing...

GABRIEL
Oh, now don't do that.

Gabriel leans in closer to the guard.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)
Do you think that maybe there's
another reason you don't recognize
me?

SECURITY GUARD
Excuse me?

GABRIEL
Oh I don't know. Sometimes people
like you have a hard time telling
people like me apart.

SECURITY GUARD
(nervous)
What's that now?

GABRIEL
Oh don't worry about it. I have the
same problem the other way around.
Happens all the time. It'd just be
shame if we wasted all this time
getting your supervisor over what's
just a simple, erm, recognition
issue.

SECURITY GUARD
Hey... Now that you mention it I do
think I recognize you. Sorry for
the trouble.

The security guard lets Gabriel in.

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM

GABRIEL
Works every time.

ACT I**INT. VERIDIAN CAPITAL BUILDING - AFTERNOON**

Erik paces through the office and without stopping, throws his car keys at Priya.

ERIK

Something came up and I won't be able to make it out this weekend. Head to East Hampton and bring my car back by Sunday morning.

PRIYA

Wait, what? Where is your car?

Erik is almost out of earshot now.

ERIK

East Hampton!

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM

PRIYA

This is Erik's first summer as a partner without an intern. I don't think he's really come to terms with it so I think he's just decided his intern is... me?

INT. VERIDIAN CAPITAL BUILDING - AFTERNOON

Priya is packing up her stuff into her briefcase so she can leave for the day. She heads to the elevator bank where she finds Zach holding a duffle bag.

PRIYA

Going somewhere this weekend?

ZACH

Yea. Uh, Lily's actually up here for our one-year anniversary so we're going to the Hamptons with her aunt and uncle.

PRIYA

(feigning enthusiasm)
Oh! That's so cool.

ZACH
It should be. Her uncle is lowkey
Veridian's general counsel and I
think he helped me get this job so
I gotta make a good impression.

The elevator shows up and they get on.

PRIYA
Well that's certainly been a perk
of dating Lily hasn't it.

The elevator doors close right after Priya finishes. Awkward.

PRIYA (CONT'D)
Oh my God. That came out wrong.

ZACH
No, it's fine.

Zach laughs nervously.

PRIYA
Not to make this any weirder but is
there anyway I could hitch a ride
with you guys out there tonight?
Erik has me on this thing and it's
just-

ZACH
Oh totally. It shouldn't be a
problem.

INT. BLUERIDGE CAPITAL PARTNERS OFFICE BUILDING - AFTERNOON

Gabriel wanders through the busy BlueRidge office looking for
the conference room, avoiding eye contact with everybody. He
spots a SUMMER ANALYST nervously checking his breath and
fixing his hair in his phone's reflection.

GABRIEL
(under his breath)
Gotcha.

Gabriel walks up to the summer analyst

GABRIEL (CONT'D)
Hey! Kid.

SUMMER ANALYST
Uh, Yes?

GABRIEL
I'm late for that meeting with the
Columbia Endowment. Which room is
it in?

SUMMER ANALYST
Um. It's, uh... I think... lemme
see here.

GABRIEL
Jesus Christ.

SUMMER ANALYST
1207B! It's in 1207B.

Gabriel walks off in search of the room. He enters a the
conference room area and approaches the RECEPTIONIST.

GABRIEL
Hey. I know I'm late but which way
to the Columbia meeting?

RECEPTIONIST
That meeting just got out... Who
are you with, sir?

The receptionist reaches for the phone and hits a few
numbers. Is she dialing for security?

GABRIEL
I'm sorry I think I must have the
wrong floor.

Gabriel speed walks out of there and into an open elevator.
As the door closes all he can make out is-

BLUERIDGE EMPLOYEE (O.S.)
Wow. That young Jew is really
something else, isn't he?

Gabriel chuckles.

EXT. TOWNHOUSE ON THE UPPER EAST SIDE - AFTERNOON

Zach approaches the doors of the townhouse and RINGS the
doorbell. Lily answers. She doesn't seem too excited to see
him.

ZACH
Lily!

He gives her a kiss on the cheek.

ZACH (CONT'D)
Don't be mad, but I offered to let
Priya tag along for the ride to
your uncle's.

LILY
Who?

ZACH
Oh, she's no one. Well she's just
someone I work-

LILY
I guess it doesn't matter. Can you
come inside?

Zach steps inside.

INT. TOWNHOUSE ON THE UPPER EAST SIDE

ZACH
What's up?

There's a brief pause.

We hear Lily's uncle, LOUIE, walking downstairs.

LILY
It's nothing. We can talk about it
later.

LOUIE
Is that my beautiful niece's
schmuck of a boyfriend I hear?!

Zach walks up to Louie and shakes his hand. It feels just a
little off considering what just happened.

ZACH
It's good to finally meet you. I've
heard such great things from Lily.

LOUIE
Oh shut up no you haven't. The only
people who say good things about me
are the assholes I keep out of
prison. Speaking of which, you're
interning at Veridian, right?

ZACH
Yes sir. It's been challenging and
it's kept me busy but I've loved
every minute.

LOUIE

I mean you're going to the Hamptons this weekend. How busy could it actually be?

Awkward silence.

LOUIE (CONT'D)

Anyway... I'm just glad my Lily is dating someone with a real future. My two kids, love 'em to death don't get me wrong, but they're total fuck-ups. So don't fuck this up.

Louie motions to both Zach and Lily.

LOUIE (CONT'D)

Either of you.

The doorbell rings. Zach walks over to open the door.

LOUIE (CONT'D)

And who might that be?

Zach opens the door and lets Priya inside and brings her over to Louie.

ZACH

Louie, this is Priya. She works with me at Veridian.

LOUIE

Then why is she here and not at work? Do interns even do anything anymore? Are you sleeping together?

LILY

Louie!

Zach and Priya look at each other, both confused.

LOUIE

I've got to go pick up Karen from Pilates. I'll see you-

Louie gives Lily a kiss on the cheek

LOUIE (CONT'D)

-tomorrow morning. Don't wake us up when you get in tonight. The keys to the Lexus are in the kitchen. Let me know when you head out.

Louie starts walking to out and just before he opens the garage door he turns around and turns to Zach and Lily-

LOUIE (CONT'D)
(mouthing)
Don't fuck this up.

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM

LILY
That's what he's been like my whole life. Even when I was a kid - same thing.

INT. VERIDIAN CAPITAL BUILDING - EVENING

David is sitting at his desk, feet up, playing a game on his phone.

GABRIEL (O.S.)
David!

David is startled and falls out of his chair onto the floor and rushes into Gabriel's office.

INT. GABRIEL'S OFFICE

David runs in but then casually sits down, trying to look relaxed.

DAVID
What's up?

GABRIEL
I was at the BlueRidge office this afternoon and have some info that might help us with the pitch on Monday.

DAVID
You were spying?

GABRIEL
Call it what you want. If you want to make it here that's what you've got to do to win business. You're Jewish, right?

DAVID
Um. No?

GABRIEL
Really? Kirsch, I would've thought.

DAVID
Nope. Not Jewish.

GABRIEL
Eh, doesn't matter. I'm gonna need you to do a little research tonight.

DAVID
Alright. What's up?

GABRIEL
I need you to go to find the young Jew who works for Columbia's endowment and learn everything there is to know about him so we can perfectly tailor our pitch for him on Monday.

DAVID
Alright. On it. How would I do that?

GABRIEL
I don't know. Maybe go out and find him at synagogue? Figure it out.

David is confused at Gabriel's nonchalance.

DAVID
Excuse me? You want *me* to spy? And I don't know the first thing about being Jewish not to mention there are like a thousand possible synagogues this guy could be at.

Gabriel holds up a finger as to say "hold on." He dials some numbers on his office phone...

GABRIEL
Hi. Judy? Any chance you could give David a little advice on which synagogues in town are popular? No, he isn't Jewish... I know! I thought the same thing... Alright... thank you, Bu-bye.

Gabriel hangs up the phone.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)
 Meet Judy at the Park Avenue
 Synagogue tonight after services.
 She'll take it from there.

INT. PARK AVENUE SYNAGOGUE - NIGHT

Judy and David are walking into the lobby of the synagogue as services are ending. They approach ETHEL and she leans in to give her a kiss on the cheek

JUDY
 Good Shabbos Ethel!

Judy motions to David.

JUDY (CONT'D)
 This is my nephew David, he's here
 from San Diego working in The City
 this summer.

David shakes Ethel's hand.

ETHEL
 Oh, San Diego! Where did you go to
 shul growing up?

DAVID
 Uh, we kind of went everywhere. My
 parents, just uh, couldn't decide.

David laughs awkwardly.

ETHEL
 Oh wow! Well you must know the
 Holtzmans.

David shakes his head.

ETHEL (CONT'D)
 No? Well what about the Fishers?

David again shakes his head.

ETHEL (CONT'D)
 Really? The Bravermans?

DAVID
 Uh, well..

ETHEL
 Tell me you at least went to summer
 camp. Rama? Young Judaea?

DAVID

Nope.

ETHEL

You may as well not even be Jewish!

JUDY

Actually Ethel, David went to Camp Alonim growing up.

ETHEL

Oh, I don't think I know that one.

JUDY

Really? Well I can't say I'm surprised. It's a little posh for your tastes.

ETHEL

Is it now?

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM

JUDY

Co-op board elections were Monday and Ethel has been holding the presidency over me all week. It's not that I care or anything, I just had to bring her down a peg.

INT. PARK AVENUE SYNAGOGUE

JUDY

You know Ethel, David is actually looking for a synagogue to go to tomorrow that's a little hipper if you have any suggestions. Maybe somewhere he can find other guys on Wall Street?

ETHEL

Let me think... My best guess is the Union Square Synagogue. If he's young, Jewish, and in finance -- that's where he'll be.

EXT. CAR RIDE TO THE HAMPTONS - NIGHT

Lily pulls over to drop Priya off. As she's getting out and walking away...

PRIYA

Thanks so much for the ride! It was
great meeting you Lily!

Lily starts the car and she and Zach continue on to the road.
There's a few moments of silence.

ZACH

Hey, is everything okay?

LILY

Yeah. Why wouldn't it be?

ZACH

I don't know. You've been kind of
weird the whole day.

LILY

Kind of weird?

ZACH

Well yeah?

LILY

What do you mean?

ZACH

You've just been short with me and
you don't seem happy to see me at
all.

LILY

Of course I'm happy to see you.

Lily smiles, but it seems forced. Zach rolls his eyes.

ZACH

O.K. Whatever you say.

There is a brief moment of silence.

LILY

I've just been thinking...

ZACH

What?

Another silence.

LILY

Nothing. We don't have to talk
about this now, it can wait until
we get back.

ZACH
Oh come on. Now you have to tell me.

LILY
I've just been thinking... I don't know if we should be together.

Zach is stunned. And sad.

ZACH
What? You want to break up?

Zach begins to tear up.

LILY
I didn't say that.

ZACH
Yeah. You kind of just did.

LILY
It's just our time apart this summer. It's made me realize that maybe we're not what's best for each other.

Zach turns towards the camera and pushes it away.

ZACH
Can you guys not film this, please?

The CAMERAMAN points the camera back at Zach.

CAMERAMAN (O.S.)
Sorry. Nope.

Zach turns back towards Lily.

ZACH
Well is there someone else?

LILY
Zach. We don't have time to go through all of this.

Zach is getting pretty emotional now.

ZACH
What?

LILY
We need a game plan for this weekend.

ZACH

What!?

LILY

You heard Louie. "Don't fuck this up" or whatever. Because of you he's finally not harassing me about getting my life together. He and Karen can't know we broke up.

ZACH

Then why did you just end things?!

LILY

Because you were pressuring me!

ZACH

I'm sorry!

LILY

It's okay!

ZACH

Why are you yelling?!

LILY

Because you're yelling!

Lily slams on the brakes at a red light. She wasn't paying as much attention as she should have been. Zach takes a deep breath and centers himself.

ZACH

(normal volume)

Okay. Sorry. We're going to have this conversation at some point but it can wait. Why can't we just tell them the truth? They'll understand.

LILY

Well we're already out here so you'll have to go back on your own or awkwardly stay in their house when to them you're my fresh ex boyfriend. Not to mention Louie works for Veridian. He could single-handedly ruin work for you.

ZACH

Alright. You raise some good points. So what do we do?

LILY
Let's just pretend everything's
normal.

ZACH
Oh okay. How hard could that be?

LILY
And just dodge their questions.
We'll try to stay away from them as
best we can, deal?

ZACH
Fine. But we need to talk about
this still.

ACT II

INT. DAVID'S NYU DORM ROOM - MORNING

David walks out of his bedroom into the living room area wearing a black hat, a big prayer shawl, and an Israeli flag pin on his lapel. His Jewish roommate JOSH laughs and

JOSH
Whoa, whoa, whoa. Tone it down
Rabbi Goldman Sachs.

DAVID
What? No way they think I'm a
gentile looking like this.

JOSH
Hey - that's our word.

DAVID
Gentile? Pretty sure it's
exclusively *not* your word.

Josh rolls his eyes as David goes back into his bedroom to change. He emerges second later dressed more appropriately. He heads for the door.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Wish me luck!

JOSH
Good Shabbos.

DAVID
And Good Shabbos to you, fellow
Jew.

David exits.

INT. BEDROOM IN THE HAMPTONS - MORNING

Zach is on the phone pacing while Lily is in the shower in the detached bathroom.

ZACH

No, I still don't know why we broke up but she wants us to act normal so that it's not awkward with her family.

INT. PRIYA'S NYU DORM ROOM - MORNING

Priya is cleaning up her bedroom while on the phone.

PRIYA

Let me get this straight. Lily broke up with you and *you're still there*? Isn't that like, super toxic? Get out of there, dude.

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

ZACH

I've been waiting all summer to go to the Hamptons. I'm not gonna let some measly break up ruin it.

Priya laughs.

PRIYA

Some measly break up? A couple weeks ago you made it sound like she was the love of your life.

ZACH

Whatever. Shut up. I'm staying. So what ended up happening with Erik's car?

PRIYA

I had no idea where to leave it overnight so I just found an open parking garage and put it in there.

ZACH

Did you pay?

Priya is looking for something in her room but can't seem to find it.

PRIYA

No, but what's one night of free parking gonna do?

ZACH (O.S.)

I guess.

PRIYA

Oh shit. I think I left my work bag in Erik's car. Lemme call you later. Good luck with everything.

She hangs up the phone. We're back with Zach.

Lily walks back into the bedroom in a towel. She goes to take off her towel but hesitates when she remembers she and Zach are broken up.

LILY

Maybe I'll grab my clothes and go back to the bathroom.

ZACH

No don't be silly I'll just turn around.

Zach starts to rotate toward the window...

LILY

No that's weird. You've seen me naked a hundred times. This doesn't have to be weird.

Zach is still facing toward the window.

ZACH

Well what do you want to do? This isn't a big deal.

LILY

I don't know. Be less awkward about it!

ZACH

I'm not being awkward! I'm being respectful!

LILY

Wow! I'm honored that you feel so compelled to be respectful!

ZACH

What does that even mean!?

LILY
I don't know! It's confu-

LOUIE (O.S.)
Kids! Breakfast!

Zach and Lily roll their eyes.

INT. DINING ROOM IN THE HAMPTONS - MORNING

Zach and Lily enter the dining room. Nothing suspicious, yet.

LOUIE
So, how did you two sleep?

In unison...

ZACH
Fine.

LILY
Good.

LOUIE
O.K... I hope you guys like
scrambled eggs and toast. Alexa,
set a timer for two minutes.

The Amazon Echo sitting in the kitchen lights up and
responds:

ALEXA
Setting a timer for two minutes.

KAREN walks out of the master bedroom and enters the kitchen.

KAREN
There he goes with that fucking
thing again.

Zach and Lily stand up.

LOUIE
There she is. My beautiful wife. My
woman of valor.

Louie runs over to her, spatula in hand, and gives her a kiss
on the cheek. Lily gives her a hug.

LILY
Karen, it's so good to see you.

Zach puts out his hand to shake.

ZACH

Hi. Zach.

KAREN

Oh, don't be such a sheigetz.

Karen goes in for a hug. Zach laughs.

ZACH

You know I'm Jewish, right?

KAREN

Then *act* like it. A handshake? What is this, First Assembly of Good Morning? Next thing you know he's gonna tell me he hunts. And from my beautiful niece's beloved, no less.

LILY

Karen!

Lily looks at Zach apologetically.

KAREN

Your boyfriend's cold... maybe even intimidating. Don't punish me for it.

LILY

You hardly even know him!

KAREN

Your auntie can always tell. Something's up.

LILY

Well if you must know-

Zach gives Lily a look of concern.

LILY (CONT'D)

(confidently)

Zach has had a bit of a rough morning.

KAREN

Oh no... I'm so sorry I judged. What's wrong?

In unison-

LILY

His classes.

ZACH

My job.

Louie and Karen look at each other, confused.

ZACH (CONT'D)

Yeah, my class for my job. You see, we have to take this silly internship class to graduate but Veridian told me that they won't let me do that. I just found out this morning.

Zach and Lily give each other a look of "Oh yeah. Played that off perfectly."

LOUIE

You know that's weird. I just signed off on my Legal intern's papers last week.

ZACH

That *is* weird. Maybe it's just a divisional thing or somethi-

Alexa's timer starts going off. At the same time, Zach's phone rings.

LOUIE

Ah! Toast is ready!

Louie pushes a button on the Echo. Zach picks up the phone and walks away from everyone else.

ZACH

Hey, David this isn't really a great time.

The timer continues to go off.

LOUIE

Alexa, stop.

Nothing happens.

ZACH

(under his breaths)
We broke it off. That's it.

DAVID (O.S.)

What? I can't hear you. Is there a fire alarm going off?

LOUIE
Alexa. Stop!

The timer continues on and is getting louder.

KAREN
Oh, Christ. It's on mute Louie!

ZACH
(TO DAVID)
We broke up.

LOUIE
Put it on mute?! Then it won't be
able to hear us, Karen.

Louie turns back towards the Echo.

LOUIE (CONT'D)
Alexa! Stop. Alexa!!

Karen runs over to the Echo and presses a few buttons. It finally stops ringing.

KAREN
Thank God.

Back to Zach:

ZACH
We broke it off!

Zach realizes it's now completely silent.

ZACH (CONT'D)
And then the whole thing fell
apart. Those damn Nutri-Grain bars.
Amiright? O.K. Gotta go.

Zach laughs nervously. There's an awkward silence.

LOUIE
Personally I hate Nutri-Grain bars.
Anyway, let's eat!

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM

LOUIE
It's very clear to me that they
broke up. Isn't it?

KAREN

Well what do you think? You're the one who's been filming them.

CAMERAMAN (O.C.)

I'm actually not at liberty to discuss our footage.

LOUIE

That *totally* means they broke up! I'm a lawyer. When they're silent it means they're guilty. I told you Karen.

KAREN

Well if that's the case I'm not really sure why he's still here. He must have better things to do that pretend to be dating my niece but whatever.

LOUIE

We'll play along.

INT. DINING ROOM IN THE HAMPTONS

LOUIE

Lily, you two are celebrating your one-year anniversary this weekend, right?

LILY

Yup. That's right!

LOUIE

Should be lot's of fun.

Louie turns toward the camera and raises his eyebrows suggestively.

INT. PARKING GARAGE - MORNING

Priya approaches Erik's car and opens the door. Her work bag is nowhere to be seen. Someone's taken it! She begins to panic. She turns and heads for the security guard station in the center of the garage. She walks up to the SECURITY GUARD...

PRIYA

Excuse me, I think my car was robbed last night.

SECURITY GUARD

Oh no. That's not good I'll get right on it.

Priya is clearly anxious.

SECURITY GUARD (CONT'D)

Don't worry miss, we'll find who did this. Can I just see your parking pass?

PRIYA

Oh. Funny thing about that. I actually forgot to pick one up. Silly me.

There's a brief pause.

SECURITY GUARD

Is that so?

The guard starts typing on the computer. Priya nods.

SECURITY GUARD (CONT'D)

And what spot were you in?

PRIYA

17B.

The guard continues typing before hitting "enter" rather forcefully.

SECURITY GUARD

Oh, that's a real shame. Looks like the camera for that area of the lot wasn't on last night.

PRIYA

Are you serious?

SECURITY GUARD

Oh I couldn't be more serious. And who knows, these cameras can be unreliable. I'd get out of here while you can just in case the cameras decide to "act up" again and something worse happens to your Beemer.

PRIYA

Wait. How'd you know it was a B.M.W.?

SECURITY GUARD

Excuse me?

PRIYA

How did you know it was a Beemer?
You said the cameras weren't
working.

SECURITY GUARD

Listen lady. You didn't pay for
parking, I don't owe you anything.
I'd recommend getting out of here
while you've still got a car at
all.

Priya runs back to her car, gets in, starts it quickly, and
starts driving out.

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM

PRIYA

He stole my bag! What do they even
do with the stolen stuff? And now
I've got to find another place to
park Erik's stupid B.M.W. This
isn't even my job!

EXT. UNION SQUARE SYNAGOGUE - NOON

David looks up at the synagogue, thinking "here goes
nothing." We cut as he's entering the sanctuary...

INT. UNION SQUARE SYNAGOGUE - NOON

David walks in. Men and women in different sections, black
suits and white shirts. David walks through the pews and
finds a seat in the middle of the congregation next to a
couple young adults, SHMULI and YAKOV. They're in the middle
of a conversation.

SHMULI

I'm not saying that I *think* Shayna
got a nose job. I'm telling you
that Shayna got a nose job.

YAKOV

No chance. With what money? Her
parents cut her off after they
found out she was schtuping that
neo-Nazi.

SHMULI

Well they cut her back on or
whatever after he started
converting.

David leans in.

DAVID

Hold on, neo-Nazi... conversion?

YAKOV

Well not really. But look at him.

Yakov motions to their right. He's clearly talking about the
only BLONDE PERSON on the men's side. He's easily a head
taller than everyone sitting next to him with very German
features.

DAVID

Alright. Fair.

YAKOV

Still don't know why anyone would
willingly choose to sit through
Shabbos services if they weren't
Jewish.

David holds a smile back.

DAVID

You're telling me. I'm David by the
way. Hirsch.

He shakes their hands as they introduce themselves.

YAKOV

I'm Yakov.

SHMULI

Shmuli. What brings you in? I don't
think I've seen you before.

DAVID

I'm working here over the summer.
Originally from San Diego.

Both Yakov and Shmuli lighten up and open their mouths.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Before you ask, I know the
Holtzmans, Fishers, and Bravermans.

YAKOV AND SHMULI

No way!

Before they have a chance to talk the ORTHODOX RABBI starts speaking.

ORTHODOX RABBI
Today's Torah reading will be done
by Yitzhak Rosenbloom.

The rabbi continues in Hebrew.

YAKOV
No way. That fucking guy again?

SHMULI
Seriously. We're gonna be here all
afternoon.

DAVID
Is this what you guys do at
services? Just talk shit about
people?

Shmuli laughs.

YAKOV
(confused)
Yeah. Do you not?

EXT. HAMPTONS BEACH - NOON

We're at the beach with Zach, Lily and Karen. Zach is buried in the sand with only his head poking out. Lily is trying desperately to pull him out, to no avail.

LILY
Come. On. Zach. Try harder!

ZACH
I'm buried in the sand! I'm doing
the best I can.

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM

KAREN
So, I told our little lovebirds
that people in true love would be
able to effortlessly pull each
other out from the sand. A little
King Arthur meets Disney Princess.
It's not great, you don't have to
tell me that, but come on I was
thinking on my toes.

EXT. HAMPTONS BEACH - NOON

KAREN
Come on kiddos! I know you two are
in love. You just have to believe!

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM

KAREN
He's gonna be stuck there all
afternoon. That poor boy... he'll
be finding sand in all the wrong
places for weeks.

INT. UNION SQUARE SYNAGOGUE SANCTUARY - NOON

David is still schmoozing with his new friends as the GABBI
walks down one of the aisles on the men's side.

SHMULI
Hang on.

Shmuli waves down the gabbi and he walks over and shakes
their hands.

GABBI
Good Shabbos Shmuli. Yakov.

SHMULI
This is our new friend David. He's
in town from San Diego for the
summer.

GABBI
Oh mazel tov. Any chance you want
an Aliyah?

DAVID
(under breath)
Oh fuck not this.

YAKOV
Oh, he's been *dying* for an Aliyah.

They can see David looking confused.

SHMULI
Come on, you must've had an Aliyah.
You know when you get up in front
of everyone before they read the
Torah?

DAVID
Oh. Yeah, I've had tons of those.

GABBI
(in Yiddish)
Oy vey ist mir.

SHMULI
Then he'll have an Aliyah.

The gabbi gives a look to Shmuli and Yakov as if to say "are you sure about this?" They nod.

GABBI
Alright. You're up in a minute.
What was your father's name?

DAVID
(confidently)
Carter.

Weird looks from everyone.

GABBI
David *ben* Carter. Definitely don't
see that one every day. Oh well.

The gabbi walks back toward the front of the sanctuary.

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM

DAVID
How was I supposed to know Carter
isn't a Jewish name? I'm NOT
Jewish!

INT. PARK AVENUE SYNAGOGUE - SANCTUARY

GABBI
And for the sixth Aliyah we're
calling up David *ben*.. Carter.

Silence and confusion from the congregation. David gets out of his seat and walks up to the *bimah* and stands next to the gabbi.

GABBI (CONT'D)
(whispering)
Just read this blessing and you're
home free.

David looks nervous.

GABBI (CONT'D)
 Jesus Christ.

David gives a confused look.

GABBI (CONT'D)
 Hey, he was one of us. Anyway, just
 read the English on the other side.

The gabbi points to the opposing side of the prayer book to
 some transliteration.

DAVID
 (now aloud, and
 flawlessly)
*Barukh atah Adonai eloheynu melekh
 haolam asher natan lanu torat emet
 v'khayey olam nata b'tokheynu.
 Barukh atah Adonai noten haTorah.*

Silence from the congregation. Then, boisterous cheering in
 English and Hebrew! David turns around and exits the *bimah*
 triumphantly. He's shakes the hands of several members of the
 congregation before stopping abruptly and running back up on
 the *bimah*.

DAVID (CONT'D)
 Excuse me.

Immediate silence. This is quite unorthodox.

DAVID (CONT'D)
 Does anyone here work in finance?

No response at first. Slowly but surely, though, dozens of
 hands go up.

DAVID (CONT'D)
 Anyone under the age of, say, 30?

Hands go down. David notices a small pocket of young Jews in
 the congregation. Bingo. He exits the *bimah*.

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM

DAVID
 Oh, *that*? Yeah I definitely knew I
 wasn't supposed to *that*. But can
 you blame me? My only lead was
 literally "young Jew." What would
 you have done? My Hebrew on the
 other hand -- flawless.
 (MORE)

DAVID (CONT'D)
My roommate spent an hour teaching
it to me last night, for good
reason I guess. No way I'm leaving
here without that young Jew.

EXT. STREET IN MIDTOWN - AFTERNOON

Priya is driving around in Erik's car frantically. She's on
the phone.

PRIYA
There are no spots. It's been two
hours.

INT. BEDROOM IN THE HAMPTONS - AFTERNOON

Zach is lounging on the bed. Lily is nowhere to be seen.

ZACH
Well just look harder. Sometimes
people will be walking to their
cars and you can just wait and take
their spots.

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

PRIYA
Seriously? You're going to
mansplain... parking?

ZACH (O.S.)
Sorry.

PRIYA
Anyway, how's the ruse going?

ZACH
Pretty solid I think. We still have
a dinner tonight with her aunt and
uncle but I'm not worried.

PRIYA
Alright, well just make sure you
don't get passive aggressive. You
kind of have a tendency to-

ZACH
So you can mansplain deception to
me but I can't mansplain parking?

PRIYA
That is not what I was doing! I was
just trying to-

Priya spots someone pulling out a spot.

PRIYA (CONT'D)
Got to go. Good luck with lying to
your ex's family!

Priya hangs up and begins to parallel park.

PRIYA (CONT'D)
(to herself)
Alright. Slow and steady.

She begins to reverse and with the help of her backup camera is doing great. As she's just pulling into the spot she notices the driver of the car behind her is still in the car. He slams on the horn.

PRIYA (CONT'D)
Ugh. Seriously?

She begins to readjust. Second attempt. Once again he slams on the horn.

PRIYA (CONT'D)
What!? I have a back up camera. I
know I'm not gonna hit you!

She continues backing up. Now the guy just lays on the horn indefinitely. Priya screams in frustration. You can hear the tears building up. She pulls out of spot, defeated.

INT. UNION SQUARE SYNAGOGUE LOBBY - AFTERNOON

David is standing with a three of his new finance friends after services get out.

DAVID
Sorry, where do you guys all work
again?

FINANCE GUY #1
I'm a trader at Morgan.

FINANCE GUY #2
I just lateralled to Evercore's M&A
group.

JACOB

And I'm at the Colombia Endowment.
I know it's not a big name, but it
pays the bills.

DAVID

You don't say?

JACOB

Mhm. And you said you were at
Veridian for the summer, right?

DAVID

That's right... I didn't know that
many Jews worked at Colombia's
Endowment?

JACOB

And you'd be right. I'm the only
one. In fact, I was hired because
of a diversity hiring initiative
they had. Guess a white Jewish guy
was somehow diverse to them.

DAVID

You know, I too was hired partially
because of a diversity initiative.

JACOB

For real? How's that?

David puts his arm casually around Jacob's shoulder and
starts walking away with him.

DAVID

It's kind of a long story...

EXT. MIDTOWN STREETS - NIGHT

Priya is stressed out, still driving around Midtown looking
for a parking space. She eventually passes a BMW of Manhattan
dealership.

PRIYA

Hang on a second...

Priya pulls into the lot.

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM

PRIYA

So what? I parked the car at the dealership. What're they gonna do? Sell it?

INT. HOUSE IN THE HAMPTONS - NIGHT

The group enters the house. Zach and Lily are visibly relieved that the weekend is almost over.

LOUIE

That was a tasty dinner, wasn't it?

Everyone nods.

KAREN

Ooh. Look-y here.

Karen gestures to some rose petals laid out on the ground. Zach and Lily feign excitement, poorly.

ZACH

Karen, you shouldn't have.

Karen smiles.

LILY

No really, you shouldn't have.

KAREN

Oh it's nothing. Better follow them and see where they lead!

Zach and Lily head off toward the bedroom.

LOUIE

Goodnight, you love birds!

Louie and Karen give exchange diabolical smiles.

INT. BEDROOM IN THE HAMPTONS

The rose petals lead to the bed which is covered with them. On the bedside table is a chilling bottle of Dom Perignon and a Happy Anniversary card.

LILY

Oh my god.

ZACH

Well they're nothing if not extra.

Zach walks over to the champagne and lifts it up.

LILY

This is over the top. Even for them.

ZACH

We can't just leave it unopened. That's way too obvious.

Zach pops the champagne open.

LILY

No offense, but I'm not really in the mood to chug a three-hundred dollar bottle of champagne.

ZACH

Me neither. I'm just gonna pour it out in the bathroom.

Zach walks over to the door.

LILY

Fine. Just be quiet about it. They think we're having the time of our lives in here so we shouldn't be in the bathroom.

Zach cracks the door open.

ZACH

As a mouse.

INT. HAMPTON HOUSE HALLWAY

Zach walks down the dark hallway into the bathroom and shuts the door. We barely hear him pouring the champagne down the sink. As he steps out, empty champagne bottle in hand, the lights turn on. Karen and Louie stand at the end of the hallway by the light switch and don't say a word. Zach drops the bottle and it shatters.

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM

LOUIE

Do you know how much that champagne costs? Worth every penny.

INT. VERIDIAN CAPITAL BUILDING CONFERENCE ROOM - MORNING

David and Gabriel are preparing the meeting room. They have Mets paraphernalia hanging up and grapefruit sparkling water on the table.

GABRIEL

David I am so proud of you. No way those idiots at BlueRidge get this account now.

Gabriel lifts up the grapefruit sparkling water.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

Did we have to get the grapefruit flavor though? It kind of sucks.

He sets it back down.

DAVID

I know it sucks but it's Jacob's favorite flavor.

Gabriel pulls out his phone as he receives a text.

GABRIEL

They just got here. Get out of here, we can't have Jacob knowing that you had anything to do with this.

David exits the conference room. Gabriel waits alone while tapping his feet. A group of three people enter the conference room. A KOREAN MAN approaches Gabriel...

KOREAN MAN

Good morning, I'm Yung. This is Sarabeth and Tony.

Yung shakes Gabriel's hand.

GABRIEL

Pardon, what did you say your name was?

YOUNG

Yung. Yung Joo.

Young glances at the table. David turns towards the camera and gives a deadpan stare.

YOUNG (CONT'D)
Oh. Any chance you have any that
aren't grapefruit? Not a huge fan
of that flavor.

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM

Gabriel sits. Then opens his mouth as if to say something,
but nothing comes out.

END OF SHOW.

Biography

Danny Noorily was born and raised in San Antonio, Texas before moving to Austin in 2015 for college. He enrolled in the Plan II Honors and Business Honors programs at the University of Texas at Austin. At the end of his freshman year, he added Finance as a third major. He completed internships at three investment firms during his three summers as an undergraduate and also studied abroad in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Mr. Noorily graduated with degrees in Plan II Honors, Business Honors, and Finance in 2019 and will be starting full-time in the summer with the investment firm DWS in New York.